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THAT ROYAL LOVER

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# THAT ROYAL LOVER

BY



KONRAD BERCOVICI



BREWER & WARREN

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## THAT ROYAL LOVER

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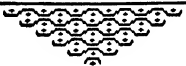




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## CHAPTER ONE

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THE outside world, especially the American world, had heard little about Roumania until the beginning of the European war in 1914. And then for months afterward, interlarded between reports of German victories, advances, atrocities, and French and English resistances, trickled the news about Roumania's indecision as to which side she would join in the armed conflict of the European powers.

Carol von Hohenzollern, nephew of the emperor of Germany, was king of Roumania then. The political world speculated as to whether he had enough authority to force a Latin people to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Germans, or whether the Roumanians would have enough courage and pride to refuse to fight against a people they loved and of which they considered themselves a sister nation—France.

When, after many tergiversations, Roumania threw her lot in with the Allies, and the war had drawn to an end, it appeared that Roumania's im-



portance in the news of the world would dwindle to very little if it would not, indeed, come to an end altogether. An agricultural country, emerging from the war with a miscellaneous population of almost eighteen million inhabitants and a territory of nearly 200,000 square miles, an almost feudal country, there did not seem to be, on the surface, any reason why Roumania should occupy much space in the public prints. It had lived unknown and quietly before the war, working out its own salvation as best it could without much trumpet and fanfare. Little that happened there was intrinsically potent to make the country the butt of the attention of the world. The protest meetings in New York and Paris against the manner in which the Jews were treated there seldom created more than a passing flurry.

True, the country has considerable oil fields, which in themselves are sufficient to drive all the motors of Europe, but these oil fields were and are mostly in the hands of a few American and English companies, who work them as concessions, and exploit them as suits them without conflicting with the oil industry of America and England. Not more than one-third of the capacity of the Roumanian oil wells has ever been pumped.

True, the Roumanian wheat fields grow enough grain to keep the rest of Europe in bread. But this, too, is kept well in hand by a few feudal barons and



speculators who manipulate the resources of the country in such a manner that the news of its riches should never spread too far and attract too much attention elsewhere. As a country Roumania had been treated like a "good thing" and had not been too extensively advertised by those who knew.

Then, suddenly, and for none of these qualities or advantages, the attention of the world was focussed on the kingdom of Roumania; because of an all too active Queen—Marie, wife of King Ferdinand of Roumania and grandchild of Queen Victoria of England, and because of her too unruly and spectacular household of sons and daughters, as anxious as their mother to keep the center of the stage of the world; as anxious as prima donnas and moving picture actresses and acrobats and tenors to hold the attention of the public. Roumania became the laughing stock of the world, the Ruritania of musical comedies, a country of pseudo romance, of medieval intrigues—a country seemingly existing for no other purpose than to furnish amusement to lovers of vaudeville jokes and models of settings for moving picture cameras.

Deafened by the claptrap, the world forgot that of the eighteen million inhabitants of Roumania there are at least fourteen million who live by the sweat of their brows, tilling the soil and wresting a living from the forests that cover the mountains,



from the rivers and the sea that border the country and digging into the bowels of the earth to furnish motive power for the industries. For Roumania is one of the richest of countries in natural resources. It has considerable unexploited coal areas, ore fields, amber fields; and its wines and its fruit are the prizes of Central Europe.

Its steers and flocks of sheep have fed and clothed millions of people, outside its own confines, for hundreds of years.

The world forgot all this because the Queen insisted on attracting attention to herself; because the princes managed to create fresh scandals daily, and because the princesses insisted upon romping about, engaging themselves to be married to this and that prince and breaking off the engagements before the ink had dried on the paper on which the news was announced. The royal household of Roumania became the smallpox of the world's newspaperdom. No one could ever foresee when and where they would break out.

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A rapid bird's-eye view of Roumania in retrospect seems necessary here. The stage must be set before the actors of the play come out to speak their lines.

Very little is known of the history of Roumania until the twelfth century. It is assumed that the



Roumanians are the descendants of the legionnaires of Marcus Ulpius Trajanus, the Roman general who built the magnificent road that leads to the banks of the Danube. Having defeated the Dacs under Decebal, a warlike people living then in that part of the world, these legionnaires, riffraff of Europe, are supposed to have exterminated the Dac men and to have taken their women in marriage. As the Legionnaires were engaged by the Romans for only a limited period of time, after that war, the mercenaries whose time of service had expired, chose grants of land in lieu of pensions, and remained to live with their women in the country they had conquered; because it had better soil than the one they had left behind and they were tired of fighting.

The records of how and under what administration those legionnaires lived until the twelfth century are few, far between, and not very trustworthy. Undoubtedly the peoples that invaded Europe, in the centuries following the original settlement, also found the land to their liking and settled there, and mingled with the population until they were absorbed by the first settlers. These invaders left their traces in the language, customs, habits and the dress of the people; left ample proof that the blood of Goths, Visigoths, Huns and Slavs runs in a goodly proportion in the blood of the Roumanians of today.



There are references to these people on the banks of the Danube in chronicles of the Roman Empire, references which incline one to believe that they were in close communication with the Romans, and that for a time Roman consuls had been sent to govern them. That they were not yet an organized country, an entity in themselves, in the eleventh century, is to be deduced from the fact that no chronicle of the Crusades mentions their existence; though the Crusaders must have passed through their territory in going from Hungary and Bulgaria toward Constantinople.

In the twelfth century, the people of these territories organized themselves into two separate states—Moldavia and Walakia, each governed by a different Prince. However, the princes fought amongst themselves when they were not in trouble with their neighbors, the Poles, the Hungarians, the Russians and the Turks. After more than a century of continual fighting they became vassal states to Turkey in 1392, and paid tribute to the Porte until 1716. In that year the Roumanian princes formed a secret alliance with Czar Peter the Great of Russia. Defeated by the Turks, separately and together with their ally, they lost their independence and were governed from then on by the Fanariots of Constantinople.

The Fanariots were wealthy Greeks of Con-



stantinople who lived in a suburb called the Fanar. These Greeks, merchants and politicians who had for centuries doné all the dirty work of the Moslems and accumulated considerable fortunes thereby, bought from the Turkish government the concession to rule Roumania for a definite period of time. There was no limit set as to how the Roumanians should be exploited; what taxes they should pay or what justice should be meted out to them. Such unimportant items were left to the buyers of the concession. At the expiration of the term, the concession expired, and the Fanariot retired—a multi-millionaire—to live in Paris where even the long Turkish arm could not reach him for part of his loot.

Each Fanariot was followed by another Greek who, having paid more than his predecessor for the right to exploit the country, increased the taxes and treated the people worse than they had been treated before. The peasants were slaves, serfs, and the rulers had all the rights and none of the responsibilities.

During their reign, these Fanariots assumed the title of Prince. Europe is now filled with Cantacuzenes, Shtirbeys, Mavrocordatos (Black Hearts) Sutsos, and a host of other princes of like names, all of them descended from the suburb of Fanar in Constantinople. During this period in Roumanian his-



tory there were many popular uprisings against the oppressors. Young men organized themselves into bands of Haiducis, roamed the forests and fields, set fire to the castles of the boyars, and punished every wrong doing of the Greek landlords. For these Fanariots brought with them, when they came to Roumania, their own managers and slave drivers, relatives and favorites, who enriched themselves during the short period of their administration. Others bought large land holdings and exploited them either by continuing to live in the country, after the masters had departed, or by practicing absentee landlordship from behind the walls of the Parisian palaces. Roumania was the happy hunting ground of the lowest element of Eastern Europe. It is a miracle that the people survived the persecutions and vicissitudes it suffered during that period and the one that followed. The cruelest slave owners in America treated the blacks far more humanely than the Roumanian peasant was treated. But then the Negro slaves had cost money. The peasants were gratuitous beasts of burden multiplying without any cost to the owners.

In 1829, by the Treaty of Adrianople, the Roumanians gained a conditional independence from Turkey; the right to choose their own princes, who engaged themselves to pay yearly tribute to Constantinople. In 1859, Moldavia and Walakia united and





elected one Jon Cuza as their prince. Constantinople was compelled to recognize this union two years later. But the inner strife of a people who had labored through seven centuries of continual warfare and internal oppression, had so changed its psychology, and the fact that there were so many foreign interests at work—Russophile, Turkophile, Grecophile and Germanophile—prevented this union from being anything but formal.

At that time Jon Bratianu, a young man who had led a rather hectic life in France and in Germany, and who had been in prison for his revolutionary activities in France, returned to his native country, and finding it so disrupted, so unable to govern itself, so unwilling to agree as to who should be the new ruler at the expiration of Cuza's term, came to the conclusion that the people of Roumania should be ruled by someone not belonging to either of the provinces. Jon Bratianu believed the Roumanians unfit to rule themselves and thought it politically necessary to have a foreign dynasty on the throne of the country. After many secret conferences with statesmen of foreign countries, the choice fell upon a young lieutenant in the Prussian army, Carol, a descendant of the Hohenzollerns.

During these secret conferences, the other countries intrigued each for their own men. For it became evident that the country of origin of the one



selected to be the ruler of Roumania would wield considerable power and would have great influence. Because of this, Jon Bratianu had to bring Carol to Roumania in a most secret manner. He left Bucharest, ostentatiously in the company of a valet, and went to Paris. From there he returned to Roumania by way of Germany. The original valet was lost somewhere and the young Prince took his place, to serve Bratianu en route. The original valet's name was Hans Koch. Prince Carol of Hohenzollern took this name while travelling with his pseudo master. Evidently orders had been sent out to watch Bratianu's comings and goings. When the border officers of Hungary invaded Bratianu's compartment, Carol was fast asleep and had to be shaken by his master before he woke up to answer the questions put to him by the men of the law. He was sleepy and tired, Carol was, and so when they asked him his name he looked stupidly at Bratianu instead of answering. Whereupon Jon Bratianu, acting naturally, not as a former revolutionist, but as the feudal baron he was, boxed Carol's ears while he said:

"You stupid fool. Don't you even know that your name is Hans Koch?"

The strategy worked. Carol was brought into the country to be acclaimed by the Roumanian people as their Prince. Bratianu was made Prime minister and became the father of his country. Carol of



Hohenzollern never forgot that his ears had been boxed by a Roumanian, that the price he had paid for the sceptre was the greatest humiliation he had ever suffered. He never forgot that experience and never forgave, and made the whole country pay in gold, throughout his reign, for that first vexation on Roumanian soil.

In 1877, Roumania, still a vassal country to the Turks according to the treaty of Adrianople, decided to throw its lot in with the Russians, who were fighting the Turks. In 1878, after the defeat of the armies of Osman Pasha, the treaty of Berlin recognized Roumania's absolute independence. Roumania no longer had to pay tribute to Turkey. It was a Kingdom. Carol became King.

To compensate Roumania for the help she had given in the struggle against the Turks, Russia took Bessarabia, one of the most fertile provinces of Moldavia, and gave in its stead the wasteland lying between the Danube and the Black Sea, the Dobrudgea which it had wrested from Turkey.

That Berlin treaty contained some clauses intended to make of Roumania a civilized country. One clause gave freedom of religious worship, equality before the law, and the right of citizenship to all people born in the country. But these rights were never accorded and remained dead letters for the next fifty years to come. The country that had suf-



ferred so much oppression became an oppressor. Bratianu, the revolutionist, the humanist, became the arch reactionary of Europe.

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The first years of Prince Carol of Hohenzollern's rule were marked by his continual desire to resign the throne and return to his homeland. The letters to his father which have been published recently show the contempt in which he held the country and its people and how anxious he was to leave. But the fortunes of that branch of the Hohenzollern family were very low, and despite his contempt for the people he governed, Carol was becoming richer every day.

His military talents may be doubted, when one considers the aspects of the wars he engaged in during his reign. In the Balkan War tens of thousands of Roumanian soldiers perished without ever having used their guns—perished because they had been sent in one direction and their food in another; perished like flies because of the inadequacy of the commissariat and the medical corps. But Carol's business acumen and talents can never be denied or doubted. With German thoroughness he organized cheese factories, wine presses, leather factories and demanded more and more land "for the crown" from each successive government. He demanded and ob-



tained higher and higher salaries for himself and for his henchmen; organized companies, bought monopolies, and sold concessions until his branch of the Hohenzollern family, instead of being one of the poorest, as it had been until a few years before, became one of the richest. Still he wanted to resign the throne. But his father's letters advised him to stay where he was. He was a good son, Carol. He obeyed. He amassed millions. The taxes became heavier and heavier.

Married to Elizabeth, Princess of Wied, he gave the young lady little love, but enough leisure to devote herself to several agreeable small arts; painting, embroidery, music and literature. They called Queen Elizabeth a "sweet old lady" in Roumania before she was thirty years old. When her hair had grayed prematurely, people said she had dyed it silver white to conform to the popular conception of her. Under the pen name of Carmen Sylva, she soon became well enough known as a poetess and as a writer of Roumanian romances. Actually she wrote sentimental rubbish that would not have obtained space in a single newspaper had she not been the Queen of Roumania. Unwittingly, Carmen Sylva set the style that made an authoress out of her successor.

After an heir was born to the throne, and that heir died a rather mysterious death, life between the royal



consorts became a mere formality. No other child was born of that union. Carol brought from Germany a nephew of his, Ferdinand of Hohenzollern, and had him declared heir to the Roumanian throne.

Roumania prospered under King Carol's rule. His administrative zeal was imitated by other land owners and speculators. The slavery under which the people were held until Carol's advent changed form, partly because of the industrialization of farm labor and also because of that wind of freedom which had swept Europe since 1848. The taxes were still very heavy; the peasants still had little or no voice in the government of their country. Only those who owned land had a right to vote. Only a few peasants owned land. But the people felt they were free and hoped for greater freedom. There were several agrarian revolts. Carol put them down with an iron hand, never overlooking an occasion to pay back for the ear boxing he had received when he had first landed in that country.

The King governed Roumania with the assistance of two major political parties—the Liberals and the Conservatives. The Liberal Party was headed by his friend Jon Bratianu. Carol took care that the two parties should hold power alternately. When the Liberals had allowed him to wrest some more land for the crown during their reign, he allowed them to



stay in power a few more years before calling the Conservatives into action. When the Conservatives had been good to him they stayed a little longer than before. For a party to be in power meant that the members belonging to it accumulated enough during their reign to keep them and theirs in good humor during the period of idleness. With the change of each governing party all the administrative functions changed personnel. The salaries for these functions were ridiculously small, yet the most insignificant office holder became wealthy during the brief reign. The term of tenure of office was actually a concession for graft and pillage; on the same style that the Fanariots had practiced.

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Indirectly, Roumania was being governed by Germany through King Carol. Officially, Bucharest was the capital of Roumania. Actually, Berlin was the capital. Germany's influence was so considerable that up to 1914 one could easily have believed himself in a German province while in Roumania. Berlin ordered. Carol suggested Berlin's orders to the Ministers of State. German goods were sold in preference to any others. German banks financed Roumanian industries. The army was patterned after German rules and the officers acted in the same arrogant manner as the Prussian officers. Carol



dreamed of transforming Roumania into a Belgium of the Orient. He anticipated that dream by calling the country by that name long before it deserved the title. Many industries were introduced. For no reason at all an agricultural country was being forced into the yoke of industry. For no intelligent reason an agricultural people was being made to manufacture things for which they had neither inclination nor aptitude. As an industrial country, Roumania was a fiasco.

In due time, English, German and French industries began to wage a battle on Roumanian territory. Knowing that though the Roumanian people had shaken off the Turkish yoke they had not shaken off the Turkish habit of bribery and bakshish, the French, the English and the Germans fought their way to the front by corruption and dishonesty. American industrialists would be shamed in their homeland if it were known how they have obtained concessions and monopolies. Before 1914, Bucharest, the capital of the country, was flattered by the name of Little Paris, and housed more idlers, more corrupt officials, more degeneracy and more prostitution than its sister city of greater renown. Foreign gold did that.

I lived in Paris as a child. I remember how offended I was when my comrades, French boys,





averred that they had never even heard of Roumania. Things changed rapidly. If Berlin was the political and financial capital of Roumania, Paris became the social and joyous center of that country. Roumania's old nobility and new nobility flocked to Paris. The French magnanimously called them all Moldavian princes and Walakian counts. They filled the dance halls, the theatres, the cabarets. Long before the Americans had taught the Frenchmen how money could be spent freely, the Roumanians had been there to teach them that lesson. Roumanian towns and cities became rich, opulent, vulgar, while the peasants were pressed down lower and lower in the social scale and exploited more and more, while vessels laden to the brim with wheat carried away part of the grain of the country to other nations, while flocks of sheep and cattle were driven out over the border into Austria, into Italy and into Germany and Poland.

Outwardly, and considering the riches of the country by per capita wealth, Roumania was a prosperous nation. Actually the peasants were the poorest of the poor, living on corn meal boiled in water, without meat, without butter, frequently without salt, and toiling from early dawn until late at night; to furnish the luxuries of the landlords, the boyars, the townspeople, the officials, and to add more mil-



lions to Carol of Hohenzollern's coffers. Curiously enough "Hohenzollern" means high taxes, in German.

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One of the clauses of the Berlin treaty which made Roumania an independent kingdom was specifically aimed to ameliorate the situation of the Jews in the country. There had been some anti-Semitism in Roumania before the advent of Carol of Hohenzollern. The Greeks and Levantines hated them because they were business competitors. Some of the old rulers had used the time honored method of blackmailing them, imposing special taxes and draining their coffers from time to time. Carol brought the prejudices of the Germans, of the Prussians and the so-called scientific hatred against the Jews to his kingdom. Even during the brief reign before the treaty was made, his antipathies had become evident. Synagogues were burned down after unproven accusations of ritual murder had been laid at their doors.

There are documents to prove that Jews had lived in Walakia and Moldavia long before the twelfth century and it is probable that they had been there before that. Some of the early voevod rulers of Roumania had employed Jews as financial advisers. At no time during the struggles with the Poles, the



Hungarians, the Turks and the Russians had the Jews been other than Roumanians. During the reign of the Fanariots, the blackest and darkest days in Roumanian history, the Jews had never helped them exploit the country, but had been known to side with the peasants in the struggle against the oppressors. There had been but little social intercourse, and few intermarriages between Jews and the Christian population of the country, yet that was not due to any aversion, but to religious differences. The Jews were very religious and so were the Roumanians. Roumania was the only country not to have an actual ghetto for the Jews. They were not compelled to live separately from the other people. They had always been free to live wherever they chose, go wherever they pleased, trade with whom-ever they chose. They were not a country within a country, or a power within a power.

After the advent of Carol of Hohenzollern the Roumanian anti-Semitic rumblings obtained a loud voice. The Jews were not recognized as citizens, even after they had proved to the satisfaction of all that they were descendants of ancestors born in Roumania.

True, in Moslem countries, none but Moslems have citizenship rights, but then none but Moslems are called upon to do military duty or to defend the country. In Roumania, the Jew was compelled to



do military service, was made to assume all the duties of a citizen without having any of the rights. When education became compulsory, the Jewish child was not allowed to enter the schools for which his father paid taxes, but was compelled to go to one of his own schools. At the university he was only admitted according to a "numerous clauses"; in proportion to the number of Jews in the country. The Jew could not rise to higher rank in the army than that of corporal. The Jew was not admitted to any functions of the town, the city, the state or the government. A Jew could not practise law. The rights to practise certain trades, to engage in certain businesses, was denied.

It was to obviate these things that the Berlin Treaty contained special clauses, but after the act was signed the Berlin government, which was a guarantor of the treaty, did not trouble itself to enforce it, despite the entreaties of the rest of the world, despite repeated demands of influential rulers and great statesmen.

Carol's reign can boast of a few agrarian revolts, and anti-Semitic instigation and systematic persecution of a people which had given its utmost for the aggrandisement of the country in which they were born. Every time the peasants seemed on the eve of venting their dissatisfaction, those in power pointed out to them that the Jews and not the boyars



were responsible for the ills from which they were suffering—that the Jews were responsible when the harvest was a poor one, responsible for the inadequacy of the quantity of corn meal in their pots, and that the Jews were responsible even for the cold winters and for the invasions by wolves of the small villages. And since the Jews were undefended and unprotected, and since these poor bedraggled peasants needed an outlet for their anger, the devilish plans succeeded.



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## CHAPTER TWO

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IT is one of the tragedies of monarchies that they are hereditary. The history of the reigning houses of the world is a recital of matricides, parricides and fratricides. Among no other class of people have such crimes been as prevalent and as frequent as in royal houses. Son killed father, mother killed son, brother killed brother, and wife killed husband, for the privilege of ruling. Yet monarchs seem to rejoice every time an heir is born to the throne. It is in the very nature of a monarch not to suffer any competition beside him. He alone must be the head of the country; he alone must be the last arbiter in everything. However, no sooner is an heir born to the throne than a competitor is born. Courtiers and courtesans of every palace, since the beginning of history, immediately begin to lay plans to win favor with the ruler to be. When the heir to a throne grows to maturity he waits impatiently for the moment when he will take the sceptre into his hands. He looks upon the ruling King as someone who lives too long to suit his purpose.



Since monarchies have always passed to the first born son, and to the descendants of that first born, every royal household has seen the second born brothers only too anxious to have the first born out of the way before he leaves any progeny. Heirs to thrones have always seen in their younger brothers enemies, and have watched their camarillas and intrigues closely. Witness the murders of all the reigning houses since the beginning of history. Absolute power contains its own poison in its very nature. The holders of absolute power are the first ones poisoned by it.

The royal household of Roumania is no exception to the rule. If there have been no fratricides, matricides and parricides, it is only because times have changed somewhat. The printed word has taken the place of dagger and poison. Queen Marie is the past master in the handling of this new weapon.

Ferdinand von Hohenzollern was no sooner brought to Roumania than the country saw the birth of two underground parties behind the official political parties. The Carol party and the Ferdinand party. King Carol was still in the full vigor of life and manhood and could not but have seen in Ferdinand the man who wished him to a speedy grave. Brutal, coarse, King Carol lost no opportunity to show his displeasure and dissatisfaction with everything the heir to his throne did. Carol



lost no opportunity to humiliate him before the people the prince had been called to rule. Ferdinand, who was not born to be a King, who was not fitted for such an office, either physically or mentally, had accepted the heirship to the Roumanian throne reluctantly, as one would accept a well-paying office.

The future commander of the army could not even keep his seat on a horse. Unprepossessing physically, a stutterer, when he arrived in Roumania he gave himself up at first to the pleasant occupations relished in boudoirs and gay companionship. Compared to the severe atmosphere of his home in Singmaringen the atmosphere of Bucharest was like that of a libidinous story in the Arabian nights. Boccaccio himself could not have invented more willing ladies than this young man found in Bucharest.

Whatever else can be said about King Carol, he was of a rather stern disposition and not an idler. Uncle and nephew had but little in common, yet Queen Elizabeth, in whose salon musicians, artists and poets frequently foregathered, found Ferdinand a rather agreeable companion. She could discuss with him matters that lay near her heart and for which her husband, King Carol, had but little understanding. Elizabeth was not an artist, God forbid, but she was artistic.

When King Carol was not forming and reforming





the Roumanian army, when he was not engaged in changing and rechanging the military uniform of his soldiers, and buying new armaments from his beloved Krupp factories, he was busy with commercial ventures which required a great deal of his time. He had no patience with the nonsense which absorbed his wife. He let Ferdinand and Elizabeth discuss pleasant matters and amuse themselves as they saw fit.

Those who knew Prince Ferdinand intimately say that he had an ear for poetry, that he was interested in botany, that he knew Greek and Hebrew and that he was continually trying to decipher manuscripts in those languages. These accomplishments may be granted, yet they do not raise his stature as a King.

During his first years in Roumania, Ferdinand met a young lady, Helena Vacarescu, a poetess, and the descendant of a noble house of the country. She was a lady in waiting to Queen Elizabeth. Prince Ferdinand fell in love with her.

The King knew nothing of the amorous affairs in the royal palace until he was suddenly informed that Prince Ferdinand wished to marry the young lady and that Queen Elizabeth, who had taken a fancy to the young poetess, was in favor of such a union. Carol could hardly master his ire against his wife and his nephew. His argument against his



nephew's choice was that it would tend to weaken the Hohenzollern dynasty in the country. He laid down the rule that no Hohenzollern should marry a Roumanian, even if that Roumanian were royal blood.

Prince Ferdinand, so docile, and humble, so unresisting until then, revolted and proclaimed that he was even willing to renounce heirship to the throne if "that thing" obstructed his union with the lady he loved. What a strange history that throne had. Those who occupy it have always first refused to occupy it. Carol, Ferdinand, Prince Carol. Maria alone would have been happy in it . . . and she had no luck. When King Carol denied Ferdinand even the right to refuse the throne, he, Helena Vacarescu and Queen Elizabeth, acting as a chaperone, left the country secretly and went to Venice to hide.

Infuriated, stunned by the scandal in the presence of which Ferdinand's action had stirred, King Carol departed post-haste for Venice, invaded the young lovers' retreat, demanded from the Italian government the expulsion of his recalcitrant nephew, dragged Ferdinand back with him to Roumania and separated him forever from Helena Vacarescu. King Carol was unwilling to see the heir to the throne happier than he had been.

Those who have described the scene, maintain that Carol used coarse language, soldatesque language



and brutal force to separate the two lovers. That accomplished, he exiled the poetess, and sent his wife, Queen Elizabeth, into a nunnery to expiate her sins while he returned to the country triumphantly. Prince Ferdinand appealed to his family. He was told to listen to reason. The humiliations Carol heaped upon Prince Ferdinand after that episode did not tend to make either of them popular with the people of the country. The royal palace made no effort to stop the lampoons in the Roumanian daily press. Ferdinand's ears were extravagantly large. They were made the target of ridicule. Not a day passed in which the prince was not compared to the animal famous for his long oral appendages.

And yet there always was a group of courtesans in the Roumanian palace sympathizing, or pretending to sympathize with Prince Ferdinand. These courtesans figured that Carol could not live forever, that given the ordinary span of life, Ferdinand was bound to survive him. Carol, who had never had any faith in Roumanian statesmen and had always believed that the mysterious death of his one child was attributable to them, grew to be more and more wary of his nephew and more and more contemptuously afraid of him. Ferdinand of Hohenzollern grew to be more and more impatient with his uncle and watched with dread how the older man actually grew stronger as the years rolled by.



In his book "Eminent Europeans," my friend Eugene Baggar tells that Queen Marie had had a opportunity to become the future Queen of England when she was but sixteen years old; that the Prince George had bluntly asked her to become his wife, and that she had refused.

England will never know how good the gods have been to her.

Let us forget the petty intrigues and political machinations that made out of this young Coburg princess, the wife of the heir to the Roumanian throne. Ferdinand did not want her. He was still in love with Helena Vacarescu. Marie was certainly not in love with him. He had nothing that could recommend him to a young lady of her temperament and beauty. She had not been unaware of his love for the Roumanian poetess. Royal matings—mis-matings—have usually been of that ilk. There were many other likely young men that Princess Marie would sooner have married, but they happened not to be heirs to thrones. Her family was bent on adding another corner to their historical crown. She must have been very beautiful then, Marie. I refuse to believe that she grew to be beautiful as she matured. She looks as though she had been born mature.

In due time the turbulent young lady arrived in Roumania as its future Queen. For a brief period



the princely young couple lived in the palace of the former Moldavian capital, Jassy. There, however, the sphere of activity was much too narrow for Marie. Having gotten herself thoroughly disliked by Moldavian society, she intrigued her way back to Bucharest where she had an opportunity to make herself disliked by many more people. While not yet on the throne, she knew the value of being in its immediate neighborhood. If King Carol had been given reasons to be dissatisfied with the impatience of Prince Ferdinand, the young princess galled him even more. For here was a young lady who asserted her superiority in everything, who paced the palace noisily and attempted to rule the country even while the King was still alive. There was no friendship lost between Carol and his nephew's wife. There was little subtlety in their quarrels. They were coarse and grossly spiced with epithets. Those at the court who had foresight, allied themselves with Marie. Not to be her friend was to be her enemy. She gave proof of a long memory and tenacious purpose from the very moment she entered the country.

King Carol now reigned with half-hearted advisers, who always had an eye on Marie, no matter what they decided. They were afraid of her. She was an unscrupulous enemy and a treacherous ally. She had a Machiavellian mind and could be as reckless as Catherine the Great. When she could not



win otherwise, she brought her charm into play . . . and that weapon few could resist.

When the European war began to design itself on the political firmament, it became clear to every European statesman and to every Roumanian politician that the struggle for supremacy within the country would be a terrific one; that in the alignment of battle forces, Marie would oppose and be opposed by King Carol; that they were two antagonistic forces battling for supremacy. Marie saw the future clearly enough.

Marie lost no time in making her husband more ridiculous than he had been until then. It became clear that in the event of Carol's death Prince Ferdinand would only be a nominal King; that the power on the throne would be Marie. She entrenched herself well with the army, made friends among generals and officers, and began very early in her marital life to show contempt for whatever was considered good manners.

Before the first child was born, her name had been coupled with this and the other man, and the scandal had become so apparent that even Ferdinand, who had let her have her own way until then, rose in wrath. Marie left Roumania and went back to England, and then royal peacemakers for the nation intervened when they heard that Marie was soon to give birth to a future heir to the throne. It was



Ferdinand who had to bow and apologize before Marie came back to assume her place. Having won her way that once, she continued in the same manner. She blew the bugle of independence. Her escapades were at first the secrets of those in and about the royal household, but before long they began to be whispered in Roumanian newspaper offices. In due time the news crossed the borders and spread to the world. People talked of the affairs of Marie as freely as they talked of the weather. What the Queen did was taken as example by the social set. Marital fidelity in the higher classes of Roumania became a joke. The sexual code, which had never been very rigid in a country that had suffered so much from foreign oppression, became much looser than that of France. To be in style, every lady who respected herself, had at least one lover and frequently more.

King Carol had protested and protested again, but the young lady was English, asserted her freedom and her individuality, and said that she would do as she pleased.

On the eve of the war even Marie's own children cast doubts about the paternity of their brothers and sisters. One of Marie's daughters, the Queen of Yugoslavia, has publicly referred to one of her sisters as Mlle. Shtirbey.

King Carol lived on. He took very good care of



himself physically, hoping that by the time he would be ready to leave this world, Marie would have settled down and King Ferdinand would remain with but the memories of her turbulence. Another child and another were born to the Princess. Marie was as prolific as she was vivacious. Prince Shtirbey began to administer the princely fortunes and became the head of Marie's camarilla. Though Carol had become more and more wary of the Liberal party, that had brought him to the throne, and had permitted the Conservative party to stay longer and longer in power, chiefly because its members had been educated in Germany, the Bratianus, the Shtirbeys and Marie and Ferdinand became wealthier and wealthier every day. The young princess was as good a business woman as Carol was, and Shtirbey was a past master at the game. King Carol left \$34,000,000 when he died after forty years of power. King Ferdinand left \$78,000,000 after five years of tenure of the throne . . . when Roumania was on the brink of bankruptcy.

\* \* \* \* \*

Before the war broke out, besides the younger children of Marie, the royal household of Roumania lined up as follows:

King Carol, Prince Ferdinand, heir to the throne, Queen Elizabeth, Princess Marie, and young Prince





Carol, Marie's oldest son. The sympathy and loyalty that reigned in that house, with two legitimate heirs waiting to ascend the throne, can easily be pictured but can hardly be described. The air was never free of poisonous intrigues and political machinations. The King and princess and princeling were so busy parrying each other's secret blows they had no thought for anything else.

King Carol was in the sixties and looked well enough and strong enough to live another twenty years. Had it been given him to live his full life, Marie would have been sixty when her husband ascended the throne. After the death of King Carol people said that there was only one man in Roumania, and that man was Queen Marie.

Prince Carol, Marie's son, would have had to wait at least forty years before he ascended the throne. He was a little over twenty when the European war broke out.

Instead of political parties, Roumania was governed by camarillas. The camarilla of King Carol was composed of rather elderly men and women who hoped that he would live at least as long as they did. A set of young politicians and pseudo statesmen, headed by Prince Shtirbey, Marie's entourage, watched anxiously the King's face in the hope of discovering that he was growing old. Had they lived at least a half century before, when it



could not be proven by chemical analysis that they had hastened the processes of nature, Carol's end would have come sooner. A still younger camarilla circled around Prince Carol. They hitched their wagon to his stallions.

Queen Marie's elder son had no hope of ascending the throne while still in the prime of health and while still possessing the ability to enjoy the privileges the sceptre would confer upon him. Because King Carol sided with the Conservatives, Marie, quite naturally, sided with the Liberals. Old Bratianu had died and left in his place his son, as able and unscrupulous as he had been, and who was now at the head of the Liberal Party. Prince Carol was not on friendly terms with either of these parties. The antagonism between mother and son was in evidence years ago. Marie and her son are too much alike in their makeup to be anything but enemies. The younger military men had settled their hopes on Prince Carol and furnished the gay and spirited entertainment his young soul craved.

The European war found old King Carol in an anomalous position. He was the head of a government over which he had no control. Quite naturally, his sympathies were with Germany; though he had never been on friendly terms with Emperor William, who had continually sought to interfere in his affairs. Carol was a Hohenzollern of the



Hohenzollerns; as such he hated the English and the French.

The heir to the throne, Prince Ferdinand, was also a Hohenzollern, but his wife sided with the Allies and was against the Central Powers; a position which gave her considerable ascendancy over the Liberals and the people of Roumania who were not in sympathy with Germany and her allies.

Prince Carol, always out of sympathy with his mother, leaned on the side of his great-uncle.

When, after several attempts to throw Roumania's lot in with the Central Powers had failed, King Carol concluded that death was preferable to leading his armies against the people of his own blood.

The European war had broken out in the middle of August, 1914. In October of the same year, King Carol called his statesmen and friends to a conference. After a lengthy discussion on the war and its possibilities, he bid them goodbye and shook hands with them. There were tears in his eyes.

The following day King Carol died suddenly. Those who respect his memory, affirm that he was manly enough to commit suicide rather than to abdicate or do what was contrary to his conscience.

Marie was jubilant. She became Queen. It was understood that she was not to be the power behind the throne—that she was the power itself; that it was she who actually occupied the throne. Euro-



pean powers began to bargain with her personally for the use of Roumania's army. The strength of Roumania was put on the auction block to go to the highest bidder. When one of the bidders held back, he was stimulated by the offers of his competitors. The country was overrun with German, Russian, Austrian, French and English emissaries worming one against the other, and eating into the flesh of its moral substance. Marie raised the ante. Seldom in the history of any people has there been as much corruption crammed into one short period as during those few years of Roumania's life. Influences were being bought and sold in the open market. The upper classes of Roumania prospered as they had seldom prospered before. The costliest silks and jewels were not good enough for them. Gold oozed from every pair of dirty hands. The grain of the country was sold before it was harvested—nay, before it was seeded in the ground.

Even those who had been favorable to the Allies and had preached intervention in their favor, began to see how much more profitable it was to remain on the fence. Despite her pro-Ally tendencies, despite the fact that most people in and out of Roumania were convinced that ultimately Roumania's army would fight on the side of the Allies, Queen Marie was shrewd enough to drive a hard bargain. She gained thereby considerable personal profit and the



gratitude of her friends and sympathizers. She was a great Queen. She was making them rich.

She helped them acquire the experience of statesmanship which later on augmented the territory of Roumania beyond the wildest dreams of the greatest patriots.

King Ferdinand was not in on the Queen's transactions. He existed only to put his official seal on what the Queen had decided and what she had done. He cared little about what was happening. Weak, sick, he was happy to sidestep quarrels with his irascible consort. Marie's power was so great that had King Ferdinand tried to interfere, she could have driven him from the throne and had herself proclaimed ruling Queen of the country.

The King's weakness, his inability to make up his mind, his procrastinations, and lack of will were secrets Marie did not in the least attempt to conceal. When Prince Carol told his father that such a position was untenable and that he himself felt ridiculous because of it, the King refused to listen to his son. Prince Carol openly and loudly denounced his mother's favorites and flayed her and them publicly, but King Ferdinand knew how futile and how exhausting it was to quarrel with a woman who did not even trouble to deny the accusations brought against her.

Finally, after three years of continual bickerings



and bargainings, Roumania's hand was forced. The Queen decided the war. Long before Roumania had entered the war, French and English generals and engineers had hammered the Roumanian armies into shape. The plans of battle were drawn for the Roumanian generals. Roumania entered the war with King Ferdinand tottering on his horse, but with Queen Marie blowing the loudest trumpet. Her publicity department boasted of more typewriters than the army had cannon. There were more photographs of Queen Marie distributed to the soldiers than rations.

The Queen's armies invaded Hungary. The King's armies were defeated. In less than half a year, two-thirds of Roumania was invaded by the Germans; the Roumanian army was rammed into a corner of Moldavia, from which it could not budge. Was the Queen downhearted? No. She had vowed to fight on to the last drop of blood of the last Roumanian soldier.

Of Prince Carol's record in that war I shall speak elsewhere. Suffice it to tell here that it was not a glorious one, that it would not have gained him even an honorable discharge from the Roumanian army, if he had been a simple mortal or even a General's son. He had been drawn into the war against his will. He fought on the side of the Allies who were unsympathetic to him. He had never been a friend



of the Liberals, of the Bratianus and Shtirbeys who had cast the die. He was out of sympathy with generals, officers and soldiers. He believed he was fighting on the wrong side. He deserted in the face of the enemy, and crossed the border, into enemy country, while the Roumanian soldiers were still fighting. Other deserters were shot in the back when they were caught. Prince Carol was eventually crowned King.



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## CHAPTER THREE

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PRINCE SHIRBEY'S name has figured most frequently in the public prints about Roumania; especially since the world has been loudly informed of the scandals in the Roumanian royal household. He has been referred to as the Rasputin of Roumania, as the Grey Eminence, as the Black Spider and a host of like names, all of which are undoubtedly as expressive and as characteristic of the man as his own real name—Shtirbey. In the old Roumanian language it means "The Extirpator."

Prince Shtirbey is a descendant of one of the Fanariot rulers of Roumania. The history of his ancestors is not more savory than that of the present incumbent of the title. Of Greek and Turkish blood, he possesses to an equal degree the cunning of one and the cruelty of the other.

Tall, dark, almost too dark for a European, as quick in his movements as a cat, he can remain for hours coiled upon himself in perfect deliberate stillness before he throws out his paw. He never misses





his aim. In the years of his secret rule of Roumania he has never missed any of his victims. No man who has opposed him has come out of the encounter whole and alive. He has gorged himself with the blood of a whole people and remains lean, alert and thirsty for more.

He was the under cover ruler of Roumania even while old King Carol was alive and on the throne. Even Carol was afraid of him.

Shtirbey had no official function. He was merely one of old King Carol's business advisors. As such he laid the foundation of the fortunes of the Hohenzollerns; without neglecting his own. He was a comparatively poor man when he first entered the gates of the royal palace. He emerged from there one of the wealthiest men of the Balkan peninsula. Though he belonged to no political party he was affiliated with the Liberals. The opposition party, the Conservatives, never dared to oppose him or denounce him; either when in or out of power. For a single word of his to the King would have been sufficient to change the political situation. The two old political parties existed only to serve the King. They governed so as to profit him best.

Though younger in years than his King, Shtirbey dominated him. He held the purse strings. The financial affairs of the King were in his hands. It was Shtirbey who ordered that inhuman, unheard



of suppression of the agrarian rebellion of 1907, just as he had ordered other suppressions and oppressions in Roumania. He had the same contempt for the Roumanian people as his ancestors had had and as King Carol of Hohenzollern had. No official in Roumania has ever regarded himself as the servant of the people. The people are the servants of the officials—from the village constable to the King.

He had started out early in life, Prince Shtirbey, to lay the foundation for his power. He welded himself, by marriage, to the powerful Bratianu family and began to administer their business affairs while administering those of the King and his own. The power an unscrupulous man could gather in his fists, with such powerful alliances and with such wealth at his disposal, can hardly be surmised. Under Shtirbey Roumania was a country of serfs and servile politicians.

No one dared say a word against him—no one dared to protest. Until recently one could have lived for years in Roumania without ever hearing his name mentioned anywhere; though it was on everyone's lips and in everyone's mind. An opposition newspaper once published a caricature of him, without mentioning his name, but a line underneath, which read, "The Real Ruler of Roumania."

What happened to the caricaturist, to the owner of the paper and to the paper itself is too long a



tale; and too many living persons are involved in it for the tale to be told now. I reserve that privilege for myself for some other date.

Though Queen Marie was very young when she came to Roumania as the wife of Prince Ferdinand of Hohenzollern, it did not take her long to discover who the real ruler of Roumania was. As the daughter of the second son of Queen Victoria she was familiar with court intrigues and court technique. It did not take her long to come to the conclusion that it would be to her advantage to ally herself with the most powerful man in the country. Prince Shtirbey also realized that it was to his advantage, and to the advantage of his family, to ally himself with the young "English Princess" as Marie was known in Roumania. Business acumen, more than mutual sympathy, brought the two together. Their well-known friendship was based on the business partnership necessary between them. And Queen Marie of Roumania is primarily a business woman. She has subordinated all her other feelings, if she had any, to her dollar chasing activities.

Once Marie had made up her mind to stay in Roumania, she began to think of her private fortune, which under the circumstances was also the private fortune of her husband, the Prince, heir to the throne.

It is unfortunate that because of pomp and false



dignity, crowned heads are not supposed to occupy themselves with business transactions. It is unfortunate that they should always need someone between themselves and the person or organization with whom they are dealing. I fancy that Marie, who loves shopkeeping and business, would have liked nothing better than to step forward on the mart behind the counter and hand out her own wares. But it could not be done as openly as that, and so the reins of the business affairs of Prince Ferdinand and Queen Marie were also placed in Prince Shtirbey's firm hands.

Making himself both useful and agreeable, Shtirbey gained such ascendancy over Prince Ferdinand, that the heir to the throne did not dare to whisper a word against him, and refused to listen to the gossip that linked the Dark Prince with his wife. The Prince's whole fortune was in the hands of the man who ridiculed his name. Had he protested or said an unpleasant word, Shtirbey could have impoverished him with one stroke; for it was one of the tricks of the Dark Prince to dominate and keep under his thumb those whom he enriched.

That Shtirbey handled his financial job well is evidenced by the fact that on the death of King Ferdinand, despite the hardships and vicissitudes through which Roumania had passed, the personal fortune of the Hohenzollerns had been augmented



by over seventy-eight million dollars. King Carol, too, had left a considerable fortune owing to the magnificent administration of his adviser, but it was only half the size of that of King Ferdinand.

Shtirbey's Machiavellian mind conceived the grand plan that would have given Marie the greatest power any woman ever had in the East of Europe. That these plans miscarried, was not Shtirbey's fault. Unforeseen circumstances had interfered. The echo of the shot in Saravejo shattered many another brittle pane. It was a simple plan. It said to Marie,

"Bear children."

One of them was destined to be heir to the throne.<sup>4</sup> A second one was to marry into the Russian Romanoff house. A third was to enter the Bulgarian household. A fourth was to crawl into a German bed. A fifth one would storm Greece.<sup>5</sup> If she bore more, they were to be married into other royal households. A clever politician once said that Europe had no statesman whose brain could offset the workings of Marie's womb.

That Marie became the most feared matchmaker of Europe was undoubtedly due to Prince Shtirbey's advice. Neither of them could foresee that the Romanoffs would lose their throne and their lives and that the Greeks would decide to rid themselves of their King. Marie's most favored daughter is a



has-been Queen; the wife of the former King of Greece. Her least favored daughter is a Queen in action—Queen Marie of Jugoslavia.

Prince Shtirbey lives in Oriental splendor in a most magnificent castle which he has built for himself in the immediate vicinity of the city of Bucharest. The property, surrounded by high stone walls, hides and isolates a castle that is set like a jewel in the center of the grounds. Paths lined with flowers and rare trees converge towards a road that runs all around the inside of the wall. Sentinels are posted at every gate and no one is allowed to pass the portals without the signed and countersigned permission of the Prince himself.

In the summer the Prince and his family live in an equally beautiful castle in Sinaia, at the foot of the Carpathian mountains; within the same distance of the Royal summer palace as the Bucharest castle is from the Royal winter palace.

The Shtirbeys are not ostentatious people and prefer to live isolated and in the dark. The Prince's hosts of daughters are seldom seen anywhere and his wife is an even rarer privilege for the eye. They travel in closed automobiles and conveyances. Prince Shtirbey has never arrived at the royal castle otherwise than in an automobile of which the curtains were drawn. It is a fact that his blinded automobile has frequently gone empty to the palace and



was followed by Shtirbey in another car; whenever he was afraid that something might happen to him.

At the beginning of Shtirbey's friendship with Marie the more astute Roumanians smiled. They believed that the English Princess was making herself agreeable to Shtirbey only to make herself secure in the country. They believed she did not know he was the most hated man of Roumania. They believed that she merely wanted to steal one of Carol's friends; for it was known that King Carol had never liked the English Princess any better than he liked the future incumbent of his throne.

When it became evident that Prince Shtirbey was also administering Ferdinand's fortune, when several transactions had netted the heir to the throne several millions of dollars, the Roumanians awoke to the fact that the English Princess had indeed discovered how to make use of the shrewdest business man in Roumania. Yet it was not suspected, and no one wanted to believe, that an English Princess would slide into a closer friendship, into a closer alliance, with the man so thoroughly hated by the country. The Roumanians still had illusions about the dignity of Kings and Queens.

In a small country such as Roumania was then, court gossip traveled fast. Had Marie taken every precaution to keep her relations with Shtirbey a secret, they could not have remained so for any length



of time. But, either because she lacks discretion, or because she wanted the Roumanians to be afraid of her, Marie threw caution and discretion and dignity to the winds. Even the secret meeting places of the two became known to everyone. It is no longer a secret to the world at large, since it has appeared in the public prints, that Prince Shtirbey had his private entrance to the Queen's apartment—to her boudoir, and that he used it as frequently and as openly as he pleased,—even more frequently than did her husband, the King. And no one dared to protest—no one dared to say a word. Everybody was afraid to antagonize the Rasputin of Roumania. Whoever would have protested against the Queen's indiscretions would naturally have involved him. It would have meant ruin—if not something more. To antagonize Marie was to antagonize Shtirbey, the whole Bratianu family, the banks, the army, all the civil, municipal and military organizations of the country.

One of the former ladies-in-waiting to the Queen has recently told the story of what she believes to have been the first meeting between Marie's oldest son, Carol, the present King, and Prince Shtirbey.

Carol was still in his teens, in the care of tutors and governesses. Marie, having been away with Prince Shtirbey for some time, had suddenly decided that she wanted to see her son—for this astute and





unscrupulous woman is also very sentimental and has occasional unexpected melodramatic outbursts. She can cry out "chi-ild" as histrionically as the best old-fashioned Drury Lane actress. Prince Shtirbey accompanied her on that visit to the nursery. The two arrived at the summer palace in a pouring rain. In those days the automobile had not yet come into general use in Roumania, and Prince Shtirbey and Marie had driven there in an open carriage. They were drenched to the skin when they reached the palace. It was late in the evening, time for the child to be put to bed, and Marie was anxious to kiss him good-night. The mother gave free play to her emotions, embracing and pressing the child to her breast. Remembering Prince Shtirbey, who stood behind her near the door, she called His Highness over to introduce him to the young Prince.

Instinctively, Carol withdrew and refused to shake hands with the Dark Prince; told him that he was cold; that he did not like him and began to cry and stamp his feet, ordering the "bad man" to leave the room immediately, crying that he did not want to see that man again. Carol begged his mother to stay there and not to go out with "that man" in the dark.

This incident imprinted itself indelibly on the mind of Carol's governess and also in the minds of Carol's mother and Prince Shtirbey. The mutual



antagonism of the two began there and then and has been unrelenting for almost a quarter of a century. Marie ordered Carol punished for his bad behavior. Carol learned to know then and there that whatever he was asked to do, and whatever he was forbidden to do, was ordered by Prince Shtirbey; and was therefore inclined to do the very opposite of that man's will.

Prince Shtirbey realized that, though he could keep everybody else in leash, that blonde little boy watched him closely and was ready to spring on him at the first opportunity. And it happened that that blonde little boy was the future heir to the throne. If events were to follow in their natural order, Shtirbey had reason to believe that he would no longer be among the living when that little boy would ascend the throne, for King Carol was still alive and Prince Ferdinand was still alive. But Shtirbey, who adores his own family, was anxious for its financial future.

In the course of the following years, Shtirbey left very little undone to prevent Prince Carol's eventual ascension to the throne. That those major plans of the Black Prince and the Queen Mother have miscarried so far, cannot be held against them.

Shtirbey, with the help of Marie, inveigled Carol into all sorts of unsavory relations with women. Shtirbey caused the great rift between mother and



son. Shtirbey first instigated, and then broke, Carol's marriage to Zizi Lambrino. Shtirbey made Carol ridiculous before the country and before the whole world by announcing the scandals which he himself instigated. Shtirbey's machinations involved Carol with other women after he was married to Princess Helen of Greece, and ultimately entangled him with Magda Lupescu. It was Shtirbey who put the heir to the throne in the position of appearing as a deserter from the army, as an embezzler, and a runaway husband. It was Shtirbey's man, Diamandi, who involved Carol in a conspiracy to obtain the Hungarian throne for himself, and then denounced him to the country as an enemy. Later on, when the exiled prince, longing for his throne, had made arrangements to fly from Croydon, the air field near London, to Roumania, it was again Shtirbey's man, that same Diamandi, who had been nominated to the post of Roumanian ambassador to France, who had the ex-heir to the throne publicly and officially thrown out of England as an undesirable alien, with Scotland Yard detectives at his heels.

As the Dark Prince grew older, Queen Marie, despite her frequent enthusiasms for other men, continued her relations with the Rasputin of Roumania. Her growing children talked openly and sarcastically about their mother's affairs. After



Marie had firmly entrenched herself in Roumania, even before she had become Queen, and of course more so afterwards, the royal palace became the center of every kind of unsavory amour and intrigue, in which the princes, the princesses, the ladies-in-waiting, the young officers and their friends took part. Of all the children of the royal household, Mignon, or Marie, as she calls herself now since she is Queen of Jugoslavia, was the only one who never entered into these scandals. Even as a child she openly and loudly denounced and upbraided her mother for her behavior, and because of that was persecuted by her.

Marie never brought her any presents when returning from her travels. Mignon was always the most poorly dressed member of the family. At public functions she was pushed behind, out of sight, while Ileana, the youngest one, was always more favored than the others.

Ileana has always been a close friend of her mother's. She traveled with the Queen and never showed any objection to Shtirbey; though she did talk of him as frequently as the rest of the family. Carol, Nicholas, Elizabeth and Mignon called him "The Black Devil." Ileana alone called him "Mama's Friend."

Shtirbey never forgot to show his attentions to Ileana, but then, her paternity has been a much disputed point. No one ever dared to speak openly



about that until Mignon referred to her sister as Mlle. Shtirbey.

"Why does mother tramp around the world in the company of that Mlle. Shtirbey?" Queen Marie of Jugoslavia said to newspaper reporters who had come to interview her.

Under such circumstances and in such a milieu it is not difficult to understand why each one of Marie's children had eventually gotten himself or herself entangled in affairs that did not in the least heighten the dignity of the Royal Household of Roumania. Extra-marital amours became the style in the best families of the country. "She plays the Queen," "She plays the princess," obtained definite connotations in the Roumanian language.

And Ferdinand, Marie's husband? Ferdinand was a complacent fool. He had never been in love with Marie and was not concerned with what she did, and whom she befriended, as long as he was left in peace; as long as his fortune grew, as long as he was permitted to play as he wanted to play and to keep vigil over his whiskey bottle. In his old age he sat at the window of the palace and leered at the passing women.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1925, the antagonism between Carol, heir to the throne now, and Shtirbey, had become such that the whole country was agog expecting something to break out.



Carol, who wavered between Fascism and the Peasant Party, encouraged the opposition to protest openly and loudly against the machinations and intrigues of his enemy and the enemy of the country. He caused to be made, under his supervision, a thorough investigation into all the ramifications of the Black Prince's affairs. He investigated closely the Shtirbeys, the Bratianus and their minions, and collected the facts, black on white, of how horribly they had betrayed the country; how nearly they had brought it to ruin, how destructive their influence had been, and how they had enriched themselves at the expense of the Roumanian people. Still, his closest friends did not dare to join him in the fight against the Grey Eminence. The Roumanian peasant is a brave soldier. The Roumanian statesmen are moral cowards.

Carol went to his father, the King of Roumania, and denounced the man and his mother to him. The King would not listen. He was sick. He was weak. He was disgusted with life. He suffered untold physical agonies. When he was made to listen to his impetuous son, he merely shook his head, and told Carol not to meddle in affairs that did not concern him. When Carol persisted he answered that it was unnatural in a son so to denounce his mother, and asked him to leave the room.



On the eve of Prince Carol's departure for London, to represent his country at the funeral of the Queen Mother Alexandra, he burst unannounced into his mother's apartment, where Prince Shtirbey had made himself at home. Leaving the doors open so that everyone should hear what he said, Carol began to arraign the Prince and read off to him the list of his misdeeds and crimes.

Shtirbey listened smilingly, without saying a word.

The Queen arose in wrath and ordered her son to stop. Carol, raising his voice louder, told her that her turn had not yet come. When he was through with the Prince, he turned on his mother. In unmistakable words the son told his mother what he thought of her and what he knew of her behavior, of her enthusiasm for this and that and the other man, and upbraided her especially for her relations with the man hated by the whole country; the man responsible for the poverty of the people and for the ruin of Roumanian commerce and agriculture. Carol told her what the people thought of her scandal and how ridiculous she had made herself in the eyes of the world, and how conspicuous she had made the whole Royal household. It was Carol who first used the words: "The Roumanian household is a musical comedy household."

Shtirbey interrupted the future heir to the throne's diatribe and remarked sarcastically that it behooved



the young man ill to use such language, since he himself had not been above reproach.

Carol ordered Shtirbey to keep still.

"I am talking to my mother."

Shtirbey rose to the defense of Marie, and reminded His Highness that he had once married a commoner's daughter and had deserted in the face of the enemy and in full war regalia. Shtirbey used the same horrible word with which Carol had stigmatized his mother, to the address of Zizi Lambrino. Truck drivers in a jam had never used more picturesque language than was employed at that noble encounter.

They were talking in such loud voices that valets, ladies-in-waiting, chambermaids and the whole retinue of servants in the Royal Palace were about the doors.

They all sided with the Prince and against his mother. Each one of them chafed under the rule of Shtirbey. Each one of them had been expecting that that terrible moment would arrive. Had Carol used his sword or his pistol then, no voice would have been raised against him. He would have been hoisted on the throne as the liberator of the country.

\* \* \* \* \*

In addition to his other charms and his other means of subjugation, Prince Shtirbey had for a long time preyed upon Queen Marie's superstitious





mind. A charlatan Seer had predicted to the Queen that Carol would not wear the crown. That charlatan appeared frequently at the palace and cried aloud his dreams and his visions, until the whole household was convinced that another one and not Carol would be King of Roumania.

There are people who doubt that Marie is superstitious enough to believe in dreams and visions. These people are certain that it was Shtirbey's diabolic manner of preying upon the superstitions of others; that it was one of the weapons he used to make the Roumanians believe that it was ordained by invisible powers that Carol should not reign. There are enough fools in Roumania who still believe in sorcery. They were told that Carol could supersede these powers only by employing more dreadful ones, the powers of darkness.

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Shtirbey had no sooner applied that horrible name to Zizi Lambrino when the three disputants in the Queen's boudoir became suddenly quiet. And then, leaping forward, Marie's son struck out with his fist at the face of the man who had insulted the one woman he had really loved. The hubbub which followed, Marie's screams, the screams of Carol's sisters and brother, who had come running from their quarters, was heard outside the palace. Shtirbey



drew his sword. The Queen's apartment filled with people. Shtirbey was held back. Carol was kept away from him with great difficulty.

Leaving his mother's boudoir, the Prince heir ran to his father again and repeated with even more precision and growing vehemence, what he had told him before. King Ferdinand, too ill to quarrel, and too far in his cups even to understand fully what was being said to him, shook his head dolefully. Carol cried out in passion:

"You have to choose now between them and me. Either they stay here or I stay here. There is no room for all of us. If I get out, woe to them and woe to all of you."

Ferdinand ordered him out of the room.

Shtirbey won that battle,—Shtirbey and Marie.

That outburst of Carol's, the fact that he had dared to hit the man everybody hated, established him definitely in the hearts of the people and laid the foundation for his return to the throne he had abdicated several times.

The epithet which Carol had hurled at his mother became the nickname by which she was referred to by those who dared more and more to whisper that the affairs of their Queen and the Black Prince were odious to them. When, in the course of troubled political affairs, the Bratianus made Prince Shtirbey Prime Minister for a short time, until they



could rearrange the situation, the whole country rose as one man against the impudence. The press and those of the Liberals who still knew what shame was and had some blood in their veins, denounced the new government. Shtirbey's name began to appear in print. People said that they would not accept the government of the interloper; that they had suffered enough, but would refuse to be made ridiculous, to be shown up as being so boneless and servile as to accept the greatest of all humiliations. They cried:

"We have had enough. For twenty-five years he has ruled behind the throne. For twenty-five years he has exploited us. Let him rule behind thrones and exploit us as much as he can, but he must not do it openly."

Others cried: "Let the Queen divorce her husband, marry Shtirbey and try to rule Roumania with him."

The Shtirbey government lasted but a short time. It was only an interim cabinet, until other minions of the Bratianu Party were put in power. However, that "impudence" cost the Liberal Party its power. It had dared too much. The Peasant Party would never have come into power had the Liberals not committed the unforgivable sin of trying to impose the Queen's friend upon the people.



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## CHAPTER FOUR

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AN old Japanese story summarizes better than any other story or philosophy, the responsibility that weighs upon every teacher.

Whenever one of Bushido's, the Japanese school teacher's, pupils did something wrong, he would take a heavy whip and lash his own body—to punish himself for being a bad teacher. The number of lashes depended on the degree of the wrong a pupil had committed.

King Carol has had many teachers beside his father and his mother. Professor Nicholas Jorga, however, was his private tutor. Considering how the Royal household lived, one has no right to expect from any member of that family sensitiveness as fine as that of the Japanese teacher.

It is unfortunate for Roumania that no one worthy was strong enough to assume the rights of tutorship to the Prince heir while there was yet time. The parental roof over the present King Carol was not designed to hold under it an exemplary child. Queen Marie was an irresponsible meddling scold,



King Ferdinand was a weakling. Had Carol not been a Prince, society would have had the right to deprive him of parental influence and educate him in one of its orphanages.

\* \* \* \* \*

Of Professor Nicholas Jorga, the tutor to a future King, it is known that the gentleman's political affiliations were and are as volatile as Marie's affairs of the heart. Jorga has belonged to every party that needed him. He is a great orator, a bombastic orator. He can wave the flag with great flourishes. Once when Professor Jorga attacked the Liberal Party, Bratianu's press answered, "We have used you when we have needed you, Mr. Jorga. We hope never to have such need again. Yet we harbor no doubt that your readiness to change your political creed depends entirely on how much we shall offer." So much for Jorga's political honesty.

No one has ever been in a room with Professor Jorga for five minutes without hearing at least one salty Rabelaisian story. He invents them. He tells them. He writes them. His epigrams on love, normal and otherwise, have entered the language of a certain class of Roumanians. His epigram on Diamandi's degeneracy is a classic.

Tall, handsome, a great orator, Jorga has been burdened with reputations. He was born with them.



He has been a Liberal, an anti-Semite, and a leader of the Peasant Party. He is a publicist, a belle lettrist, a dramatist, a lecturer. He is the dean of the Roumanian Universities. He has taught history for a number of years. He writes editorials for his newspaper at breakfast, finishes a play before the noon hour, speaks in parliament in the afternoon, has the play produced that same night, writes a serious treatise on history while riding home from the theatre, has the magnum opus published the following day, forgets about it before the sun has set, and begins the rounds again. His "Historical Works" are spread over two hundred volumes—of ten to fifteen pages each.

It is idle to charge Carol's volatility entirely to the influence of his tutor, when one considers his heredity and environment, yet there can be no doubt that Professor Jorga has not been the ideal person to check his pupil's tendencies toward the frivolous; he has undoubtedly encouraged them. He has a lusty feeling for the good things of life, Jorga has, and does not hesitate long between a well roasted duck and a theory of life, between a handsome woman and the destinies of a country. The Parisian boulevards know him better than the culture hunters at the lecture halls of the Sorbonne.

Before Carol was fifteen, he had been initiated into



the pleasures of feminine charms. Unscrupulous and irresistible, there wasn't a pretty actress or singer whom he did not fêter and court. Queen Marie was amused by her son's amorous activity when the gossip at court began to name this and that lady of honour as one of her son's new conquests.

Whenever Carol emerged victorious from an encounter with an invincible lady, Marie considered it a feather in her own cap.

When King Ferdinand protested about his son's behavior, Marie came to Carol's defense. Ferdinand's long illness had made him forget that he had himself succumbed, as youth will succumb, to Bucharest's tolerant attitude toward sexual affairs. Marie was much more tolerant than the King. She was young and full blooded and was not as squeamish as he was. True, she counselled discretion—but then—Carol's mother's cautioning discretion was not to be taken seriously.

When Carol was brought before the royal pair and a room full of counsellors to account for a particularly loud and indiscreet party with several young ladies of the Bucharest National Theatre, a party at which much champagne had been drunk and both Carol's male and female companions had been unusually boisterous, the young Prince defended himself saying that he was no worse than a hundred



other young men and much older men in Bucharest. That shaft had a barb; one of the statesmen present was the protector of one of the ladies involved.

Instead of denying that he had participated in the party, or putting forth some alibi, Carol answered to the admonitions of his parents that he was through with bowing under reprimands. He was no longer a boy. He was seventeen. He was a man.

The King was amazed at his son's insolence. Queen Marie was amused. She winked at her royal husband, dismissed the Prince, saying loudly enough for him to hear: "*Il faut bien que jeunesse s'amuse.*" Youth must have its fling.

The party Prince Carol threw, a few nights after that scene with his parents, was even more boisterous than the preceding one. It was not only a merry party, it was an answer to those who had called him to account.

Prince Shtirbey watched over those parties and encouraged them secretly.

Before he was twenty, Prince Carol began to weary of the easy conquests he was making. Bucharest whispered, through loud-speakers, that the heir to the throne had grown tired of all women.

Later on, Carol's eyes fell on Mlle. Jeanne Lambrino, "Zizi," one of his mother's young ladies-in-waiting. Mlle. Lambrino is an indirect descendant of Prince Cuza, who reigned over Roumania be-





tween 1836 and 1848. Zizi was only twenty and Carol was twenty-one when they met. Her resistance to his advances excited him. The tricks he had hitherto employed to win women were wasted on Mlle. Lambrino. Though she was interested, she refused to fall into his trap and refused to become his mistress. She knew what that meant. She knew the fate of the discarded ladies.

Carol neglected his gay friends and his occupations and began to devote himself exclusively to the project of winning Zizi.

Queen Marie winked at the suspected liaison between her son and the young girl. When she was told that Zizi Lambrino was not succumbing to her son's advances, Marie began to fear that the young lady had plans a trifle more ambitious than to become the Prince's favorite of the moment.

The petty persecutions to which Zizi was subjected and which she related to Prince Carol without understanding the underlying motives wove the two youngsters more closely together. What would have been a passing affair, as unimportant as other affairs in Carol's life, was fanned by resistance and petty persecutions to assume the proportions of a conflagration. Carol, who had set out for an amorous moment, was soon enmeshed in the nets of a serious love. He respected Zizi the more because she had not fallen an easy prey to his early desires. Men who



believe themselves irresistible are the prey of their own egotism when they meet a scheming woman. And Zizi was that. She was out for "all or nothing." Shtirbey had encouraged her secretly.

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Roumania's entrance into the great war separated for a time the two young lovers. The Prince left for the battle front. Of his ability and capacity as an officer, and the great things he accomplished in the war, I take as witness the words of General Averescu. He wrote:

"On the 29th of October, 1916, I received the order to withdraw from the Valley of Prahova. We were all downcast and heartbroken. We were withdrawing before the onslaught of the enemy and we were getting ready for the battle before Bucharest. The sky was lighted by the fires of the oil wells which we had ignited. The army was withdrawing, fighting continually. At nine o'clock in the evening I found the Prince heir with his friends, heads of army corps, still at table in the mess hall. I told him the soldiers were without officers, that they must all go immediately to their posts. The Prince refused to go and refused to let his companions go. At two o'clock in the morning he and they were still drinking, carousing, while the enemies' advance guard was but twenty miles away.



... He has sullied everything he has touched; honor, responsibility."

Towards the fall of 1917 the Roumanian army had been rolled back by the Mackensen forces. The territory not yet in the enemy's hands was but a small corner of Moldavia. The royal court had been moved from Bucharest to Jassy. Mlle. Lambrino and her father, General Lambrino, were there. Carol was also in Jassy.

King Ferdinand was anxious to make a separate peace with the enemy. Queen Marie opposed him. She staked all to win everything. Seven-tenths of the country was under the heels of the Germans. The remaining three-tenths was suffering under the even more oppressive rule and the debauchery of the Russians, the supposed allies of Roumania. The worm of disintegration had already eaten into the hearts of the Muscovite troops. They treated Moldavia worse than they would have treated conquered territory. The Russian soldiers killed their officers and robbed and raped the inhabitants.

Carol, concerned only with the progress of his affair with Zizi Lambrino, took no interest in what was going on around him. The Queen was treading rather softly just then; for the Roumanians now reproached her for inveigling them into a struggle from which they had no hope of emerging victorious. The cannons France sent to Roumania by



way of Russia, were never delivered to the Roumanian army. The debacle of its soldiery was due in part at least to the absence of the artillery promised, but which had never arrived. Soldiers and officers deserted to the enemy in groups of hundreds and thousands. The whole of the army was ready to pass over to the enemy, but the Germans were not ready to receive them, and would not have known what to do with them had they come over. The Germans had enough prisoners to feed already.

I am copying here a note of one of the German generals to his subordinate.

"Accept no Roumanian prisoners. We must consider that three of these deserters consume as much food as one of our own soldiers. Food is not overplentiful right now and not easy to transport."

At the beginning of 1918 Russia had veered around and changed her status from ally to enemy; to Roumania and to her other allies.

Prince Carol deserted his own army. In the guise of a Russian officer, he crossed, with Zizi Lambrino, into enemy country, and had himself married to her at a church in Odessa.

All Queen Marie had to say on the subject was:

"Mlle. Lambrino is both intelligent and ambitious."



She had not one word to say about the young lady's virtues.

Carol's defense was that, before deserting, he had warned his father that he was anxious to renounce the Roumanian throne and marry the young lady; that he had told his father that he was disgusted with Roumanian politicians and statesmen.

Long before Mussolini had proclaimed his credo, this young Prince had reached conclusions similar to those of the large-eyed Italian dictator. A country, Carol maintained, had to be ruled by one strong man, with the help of twelve willing men appointed by a dictator. The fact that he was disgusted with the throne and that he longed to be away from the tutelage of his mother, decided Carol to desert the army, abandon his country and marry the woman he loved, on foreign territory, "under the protection of the bayonets of his enemies of yesterday." (Ferdinand's letter to his son.)

In due time, however, not because of filial affection, but because of financial necessity, Prince Carol consented to come back to Roumania with his morganatic bride, who was about to become a mother.

Once on Roumanian territory he was made a prisoner. While imprisoned the clique tried to poison his mind with tales of Zizi Lambrino's pre-



vious love affairs. They showed him proofs, documents and photographs, to prove that the young lady was not over-faithful to him even then, while he was in jail.

Carol knew too much of the machinations of the Roumanian secret service to believe what they told him. He continued to send protestations of love to Zizi Lambrino.

"I am your husband. I am the father of your child. Whatever happens, I will know how to shoulder my responsibilities."

Meanwhile the German army had been defeated on the west and was withdrawing hastily from the east. The Roumanian court returned with pomp and fanfare to Bucharest.

This turn in the affairs of Roumania contributed to Carol's change of attitude towards the woman he had proclaimed far and wide as his legal wife. What contributed, more than arguments and political aspects, to this change of heart, was Queen Marie's understanding of her son. She placed other women in his path. She knew how incapable he was of abstinence despite his protestations of love. The most beautiful, charming and experienced courtesans were thrown in his way.

When his resistance had weakened, he was introduced to Princess Helen of Greece, daughter of Constantine, the Greek King. She accepted him.



She was forced to accept him. Carol was not a husband—he was a political alliance.

In a letter, the last one which Carol sent to Zizi Lambrino, he wrote that his marriage to the Princess was only a formality. He added, however, that his fiancée “has considerable understanding for my battered heart and shares completely my views on life.”

Princess Helen gave birth to a son less than seven months after she was married to the Prince. The marriage was obviously much more than a mere formality. But to prove that she did share Carol’s views on life, and perhaps also Queen Marie’s, Zizi Lambrino was received, a welcome guest, at the Prince’s household even after his marriage. Court officials, diplomats and statesmen bowed low and addressed her as Princess, a designation to which she was not officially entitled.

Where else but in this musical comedy royal household would such a thing have been possible?

During the Zizi Lambrino-Carol scandal, which pierced through into the world press despite the loud booming of the cannons, Professor Jorga had to listen to very vivid reproaches from the Liberals and the Bratianus. The Zizi Lambrino episode was not unwelcome to some Roumanian statesmen, Shtirbey and Bratianu included, who were planning to rid themselves of the Hohenzollern family. King Ferdinand was but a pawn in their hands. He



signed decrees, letters, documents and read messages from the throne. To Queen Marie the Zizi Lambrino incident was a careless move in the checker game she was playing—a move which compelled her to rearrange her figures for the battle. As far as she was concerned, the affair had as many advantages as disadvantages. It delivered Carol into her hands, and stopped him from censoring her behavior. Carol was a weapon which she could wield against political adversaries, against Bratianu and even against Shtirbey, who had become more arrogant than she had believed even he could be.

By his environment Carol was taught that a man's ability, position and opinions had to be marshalled to serve his ambitions and his desire for power. His own inclinations and the tutoring of Professor Nicholas Jorga had taught Carol that a man ought to marshal the power at his disposition, the intrigues of which he had knowledge, and the intrigues which he could set in motion, to serve his lust and satisfy his desires.

Carol rises in defence of the old feudal traditions and rights of kings; yet he believes that even constitutional monarchy is not democratic enough for this age and century. He reverses himself occasionally and claims to be a fascisti of the Fascisti; a man who believes in government by order and appointment.





His principles and theories are under his feet when he emerges as the lover, the man who cannot resist the temptation aroused by the passing of a pair of beautiful ankles, an alluring figure or a pair of promising eyes.

In private conversations, Nicholas Jorga, an old man now, cries out vigorously: "He is a man! He is a man!" Ecce homo.



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## CHAPTER FIVE

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THE European war had been foreseen a long time before, and was considered inevitable by most European statesmen. Roumania belonged to the Small Entente, and should have sent her army with the Austrians and Hungarians against the Allies. Yet it was known that Roumania would not hesitate to change her alliance if she thought to profit more by the new conditions presented to her. No state ever did carry out treaties except when convenient or when forced to do so. Internally Roumania was amply prepared to take care of both sides of the question. She had one set of pro-German statesmen and another of pro-Ally. In case of failure one set could always throw the blame on the other.

I have already told of the internal division of the royal household, of King Carol's and Prince Ferdinand's pro-German tendencies and of Marie's and Bratianu's pro-Ally sympathies. The war had no sooner broken out than the Allies and the Germans began to court Roumania. German and French



talions and sent in the first line of battle. Those who were not killed by the enemy were killed by the Roumanian soldiers in retreat. The order to the officers of the Roumanian army was: Kill the Jewish soldiers in your company.

I will not speak here of those who were officially court-martialed nor shall I say a word of those who were killed in the prisons. The relatives of these Jewish men in the Roumanian army, mothers, younger brothers and sisters, were left prey to the basest instincts of the populace and the police who vented their triumph and their defeat in the most sadistic manner.

The Jews were publicly beaten and imprisoned, then caused to disappear mysteriously. The Norwegian consul in Galatz, Rubenstein, who happened to be a Jew, was arrested by mistake. When the Norwegian government intervened the authorities did not dare produce the prisoner. They announced that he had committed suicide in his cell. Russian buyers, sent by the Russian government to Roumania, disappeared as mysteriously—they and the money they had brought with them. To be arrested was equivalent to being taken out for execution. Needless to say that the families were blackmailed over and over again. The ransomed men and women lived until more and more money was paid to the officials and their go-betweens.



Neither King Ferdinand nor Queen Marie, nor the Bratianus were unaware of what was happening; for, protestation followed protestation. The United States government was informed of the facts. Though the American government investigated them, not a word was heard on the subject from that source. The King, the Queen, the Generals—Averescu, Presan, Oprescu, Iliescu, the Bratianus and the Shtirbeys were all personally responsible for these butcheries.

While the Roumanian soldiers were on the front, advancing or retreating, this group stuffed its pockets, blackmailing the Jewish bankers and industrialists of the country and even the wealthy Jews of other countries, threatening to make the lot of the Jews in Roumania even worse if more money was not forthcoming. The Roumanians were Allies, and therefore immune from censure on the part of England and France. When a stronger voice made itself heard the government answered that all the Jews were spies.

When Mackensen had driven the Roumanian army back, and had followed their tracks with his heavy cannon into Bucharest, the set of Roumanian politicians who had sympathized with Germany came into the good graces of the invader. The Roumanian army withdrew into Moldavia where the Roumanian generals who had been so ignominiously



defeated by the Germans vented their ire and disappointment on the Jews again.

Hundreds of them were killed by military order. Hundreds of them committed suicide in the jails. And thousands were being killed without any provocation by the soldiers who had secret orders to do away with them.

To the cries and the protestations of the Jewry of the world, the royal pair turned a deaf ear. They could not busy themselves with such unimportant matters while the war was going on. But they could amuse themselves in their own manner as they did at Cotafanesti.

Cotafanesti is a charming isolated Moldavian village. During the retreat, the Roumanian general headquarters took possession of one of the largest houses in the town. The French officers who had come to help reorganize the Roumanian army occupied part of that house. The Roumanian ladies, of the better class, were then called upon to entertain the hard working French officers. There was plenty of champagne and good music, and the ladies were generous. The ladies-in-waiting of the royal household were well represented at these parties, which continued night after night. And then the Frenchmen became more exigent. Since the house was warm, and the champagne heating, they demanded that the young ladies should serve them in the nude.



The ladies, most of them beautiful, gracefully acquiesced to the demands of the valiant officers. Night after night these orgies continued, while the cannons boomed and men groaned and shrieked and cried out in agony.

Sentinels were posted all about the villa to see that no one disturbed the revelers. At first these sentinels were amused by the frolicking of their betters. In their cups, the noble ladies, nude, loved to come down to offer a little drink to one of the soldiers, and even dragged some of them into the parlor and ordered them to dance the national dances before them.

Soon, however, these sentinels began to shake their heads dolefully. They had never believed such orgies possible, and thought therefore that their noble ladies—princesses and daughters of eminent boyars, had gone mad.

Then one of the sentinels, who had been dragged inside and had been assaulted by some of the ladies, told the others that these women were undoubtedly possessed by the devil. It was ungodly and inhuman to do the things they were doing. Each shot of the enemy's cannon was greeted by the revelers within with loud laughs of derision. When some of the panes in the windows had been shattered by the concussion, the French officers cried out in joy and the ladies clapped their hands. And then the sentinels



came to the conclusion that only devils and people possessed by the devils would behave as those people did. They took the hay and the straw, the rations for their horses, piled them up around the entrances, soaked the whole thing with kerosene and set fire to the building. Fortunately or unfortunately, the revelers succeeded in escaping from the furnace-like fire, and ran out, gamboling nude on the fields and in the forests.

The affair leaked out. The government was asked to investigate. The witnesses, the sentinels, were called and questioned closely. At the end of that investigation, not one of the sentinels remained alive to tell the tale again, and all but one of the participants of the Cotafanesti revelers are alive and just as frolicsome as ever. All but one; the hair of one of the ladies had been burned to the roots.

The Roumanian Red Cross, headed by Queen Marie, did not accept any Jews. Yet when the enzymatic typhoid fever broke out among the soldiers, the Jewish synagogues and schools were taken possession of by the Roumanian army and used as isolation camps for the sick soldiers. The Jewish soldiers, however, who suffered from the same malady, were compelled to live in already overcrowded Jewish homes. This stupidly barbarous action, invented to kill Jews, rebounded upon the whole population of Roumania. More people died of enzymatic fever than of wounds and on the battlefield.



Queen Marie appealed to the world, especially to the Jewish world, to help stem the disease among the populace.

It is unreasonable to credit the present King Carol with greater sympathy for the Jews than his tutor had or than his parents had, though he has been involved with many Jewish women in love affairs. There have already been a good many pogroms since his ascent to the throne.

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It can hardly be imagined that the anarchy which reigned in Moldavia while the Roumanian royal court was at Jassy could have caused in Carol that hopelessness which made him abandon the heirship to the throne and desert to the enemy to marry Zizi Lambrino. Many of his friends had deserted before him. General Soccec, Colonels Sturza, Jurescu and Crainiceanu had passed to the Germans with their entire regiments before that.

When the Roumanians signed a separate peace treaty with the Germans in Bucharest, the German government exacted definite stipulations regarding the Jews. The Roumanians promised, knowing well that they would know how to get around their promises as soon as they were again masters of the country. Roumania had been beaten, disrupted, ruined. Its internal affairs were in a panic. Its treasury was empty, the Germans had taken away





most of the railroads' rolling stock, had shipped out of the country the grain, the horses, the cows. Roumania was a barren land where everything had to be done anew.

Did Queen Marie worry about that? She who later on pranced on a white charger, when the armistice was signed between the French and the Germans, was not downhearted by what had happened to Roumania. She believed in the ultimate triumph of the Allies. She had great faith. She had not given up any of her activities or any of her pleasures during the war. She had beautified herself. She had invented a costume that fitted her well, that brought out the charm of her profile and hid her aging throat. Carol's desertion to the enemy, his morganatic marriage, were merely flies in the ointment, for she was actually in the throes of a new enthusiasm—for a Canadian colonel who had become her slave. It is difficult to tell the exact date and the conditions under which Queen Marie met the mysterious Colonel Boyle. It is only known that he came from Canada, though some people still maintain that his real home was Alaska, and still others affirm that he was no colonel at all.

At any rate, Colonel Boyle superseded Shtirbey in the Queen's favor and became her steady attendant and emissary. Since the war was still on, Colonel Boyle began to be credited with all kinds of heroic adventures. An absolute stranger, who did not



know a word of the Roumanian language, he was supposed to have fallen in love with all things Roumanian. He saved hundreds, nay, thousands of Roumanians from the hands of the Bolsheviki. A Desperate Desmond come to life, he snatched women and children out of the claws of death and prisoners out of the encampments of the enemy. When he was not with Marie he was supposed to be on dangerous missions that required tact, discretion, energy and resourcefulness. No one knew exactly what these missions were, but Queen Marie assured everybody that her country could not exist without Boyle. He was a godsend. She even sent Colonel Boyle to Russia to speak to Carol when he had run away with Zizi Lambrino. That mission failed. Boyle, however, returned and assured everybody that not only would the future heir to the throne return to Roumania, but he would even give a plausible reason for having run away.

When Marie grew tired of Boyle she began to send him out more frequently and on more dangerous missions. After the death of the Russian czar, she sent Boyle to try to get for her sister, wife of the Grand Duke Kyril, the throne of Russia. That sister had once been the Duchess of Hesse and had divorced her husband to marry the Grand Duke Kyril. Her husband was therefore the nearest claimant to the vacant Russian throne.

Boyle was also an aviator. He organized, or



attempted to organize, the Roumanian aviation forces. He was not very successful in that, either, but he had earned a private plane. He was presently sent to the front occupied by Wrangel, the general fighting at the head of the White Russians to reinstate czardom in Russia. Boyle's mission was to find out when Duke Kyril would become Czar of all Russians. Boyle had a lot of pep. He could stimulate himself as well as he did others. He returned from the Wrangel front and announced to the Queen and to the world that Prussia's return to her senses was merely a question of months.

After he had returned from the Wrangel front, the same Colonel Boyle was dispatched to Switzerland to negotiate there the marriage between Princess Elizabeth of Roumania and Prince George of Greece. That mission was crowned with success. The Greek King is still married to the Roumanian princess but he has lost his throne and lives in one of the smaller royal palaces at the expense of the Roumanian people.

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Six months after the separate peace had been signed by the Roumanians with the Germans, Germany was defeated by the allied armies. The Marghiloman cabinet, which had signed that separate peace, was ignominiously dismissed and the Bra-



tianus, the pro-Ally war cabinet, came back in great state. They had won the war. Yet even the Bratianus had a difficult task to make people forget how they had won the war. Even the Bratianus could not make the soldiers forget how they had been abandoned by their officers, how they had been made to face cannon with no artillery to back their forces, and how the enemy had devastated the country. Even the Bratianus could not make people forget that while they had been fighting, their noblemen and statesmen had amused and enriched themselves. The Cotafanesti affair had not been an exception. Those who had remained in Bucharest during the occupation of the Germans knew that the noble ladies, daughters and wives of boyars, had been on intimate terms with the invaders and had entertained the German officers with balls and musicales and drinking parties.

Following on the heels of the retreating German armies, the Roumanians occupied part of Hungary and crossed into Bulgaria, where they appropriated more and more territory despite the denunciations of their former allies. Possession is ten-tenths of the law in Roumania.

Meanwhile Carol was still in love with Zizi and refused to listen to Marie. Instead of agreeing to an annulment or to a divorce from Zizi, he sent her letter after letter assuring her that he considered



himself her husband and would do so for the rest of his life.

"My love," he wrote to her. "I have had a violent discussion with my mother. I have violently defended our cause, but you also, my darling, must help me and must obey me. First as a proof of your love for me and also because you must obey your husband."

Even after the annulment was pronounced by the Roumanian court, in the absence of both the Prince and his wife, Carol wrote on the first of August, 1919:

"My dear Zizi. Obligated to leave at the head of my regiment, I am thinking that one never knows what is going to happen. I want this letter to serve you as recognition from me that I am the father of the child you will give birth to and that I have never ceased, despite the annulment proceedings, to consider myself your husband."



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## CHAPTER SIX

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CAROL continued his protestations to Zizi Lambrino and assured her that he would never, never give her up despite the insistence of the politicians and his mother's pressure. He had been almost forcibly separated from her, but he was permitted to conduct an active correspondence with his wife.

When Roumania had emerged from the war with twice as much territory and a population almost three times as great as it had had before it had entered the struggle, the royal lover underwent a change of heart. It was one thing to be the heir to the throne of a kingdom of six to seven million inhabitants, and quite another to be the heir to the throne of a kingdom of eighteen million inhabitants.

King Ferdinand's illness was becoming daily more severe. His life was in continual danger. The heir to the throne's mother understood her son well. She, and Shtirbey and Bratianu, put fair women in his way, hoping that he would discover a new passion. His fidelity to his morganatic wife, however,



was not impaired by these passing amours. Carol has a tremendous capacity for love and he seldom forgot Zizi Lambrino, even in the midst of the most prolonged revels. He was faithful to her in his own fashion—he loved her. But to give up the throne of a country of eighteen million inhabitants and such lovely woman subjects was infinitely more difficult than it had been.

Meanwhile Queen Marie had tread a little too heavily on the toes of her prime minister and the rift between her and that gentleman grew despite the adroit intercession of Shtirbey. Bratianu now ruled the country as an autocrat, resented the interference of the Queen in his affairs, and wanted to censor her publicity, her speeches and her activities.

“Madame, my father has brought the Hohenzollerns to the throne of Roumania. I am afraid his son will have to sweep them out.”

In despair and fear of losing her power and her cash Queen Marie turned to her oldest son. She explained that unless the family presented a solid front to Bratianu’s growing enmity to the Hohenzollern dynasty, they would be lost. There were rumors that Bratianu wanted to make himself president of the Roumanian republic.

Carol listened to reason and for a time there reigned almost complete harmony between mother and son. Common interests welded them closely.



The Queen took advantage of this period of quiet to convince Carol that it was to his disadvantage and to the disadvantage of the whole royal household to continue his association with Zizi Lambrino. The annulment of their marriage had long since been pronounced by the Roumanian courts and was effective if Carol wished to take advantage of the letter of the law.

Carol had grown a little tired of Zizi's nagging letters. She wanted to know when he would come back to her.

Carol agreed with his mother. In due time, the great matchmaker introduced to her son Princess Helen, daughter of King Constantine of Greece, and Carol assented that she was the right person to wear the crown of the Roumanian kingdom.

Whispers of the royal engagement became louder and louder. In November, 1920, Carol wrote to Zizi Lambrino:

"I have been told that you don't ever want to see me again if I leave you now. I don't want to insist too much on that point. You will take such action as you think best. I had believed that it would be more agreeable to you that we should meet and talk the matter over, no matter how painful such a meeting might be. And then I have wanted to see our child. You see, I am writing to you not as a conqueror, but as one who has been conquered. I





have fought to the end for what I believed to be my happiness. But I have begun to see that everything is against me and I have surrendered. The future will tell me whether I was right or wrong. Don't ever believe that my affection for you has diminished. All my life, my heart will remind me of what you have been to me. Always I shall remember the luminous hours of our evanescent happiness. The charm has been broken. I have turned a new page of life. In this gesture which must seem to you horrible and heartless, I must tell you that love for my country and the desire to do something have forced my hand. You must not have any fear. You must think of the future of the child. Who knows? Perhaps you will find in him the joy which will attenuate the sufferings caused by our separation. Think of the child. He should become the aim of your life. Don't believe that I am playing the moralist here. I write this as one who wants to continue to be your friend and who will take care of both of you. The past which has been so beautiful and so painful will help us go through the trials that will beset our lives."

The answer to this letter must have touched the heir to the throne, for he wrote another letter to her dated from Switzerland which read:

"My poor baby: Your note in which you recall to me the verses which we so frequently read to-



gether has reached me. I am not so sure that this note will reach you, but I must tell you certain things. Don't believe that I have disarmed without fighting. I have resisted to the last extreme and have declared myself beaten only when I realized I was alone—that everybody was against me. Yes, my poor little one, it is true that I have become engaged, and to a princess! It is so much against my principles that I am myself stupefied by my action. Don't believe that I have been forced to do so by my parents. I have found someone who can understand me and who has the same ideas and theories of life as I have. She has agreed to console a profoundly lacerated heart. I should have wanted to wait a little longer and let time blot things out. But circumstances independent of our will have compelled us to act quickly. Remember, however, that I shall never abandon the two of you."

Why did Carol write Zizi Lambrino that it was so horrible to have engaged himself to marry a princess? It is evident from this one line in his letter that he had not only given up the throne but was strongly inclined to the Republican form of government, that he had criticized the existence of all princes and princesses. Yet even while writing this letter to his morganatic wife, Carol, who seemed so remorseful, was enjoying himself so thoroughly that when it was decided that he should go on a world



tour before marrying Helen of Greece, he simulated first an accident, saying that he had fallen from his horse, and when that did not work, he fired a bullet through his leg, inflicting upon himself an injury that would detain him where he was.

But Marie had the last word in this affair also. Carol ultimately let himself be persuaded and traveled extensively in India and Japan and in the United States.

Queen Marie referred to this trip of the heir to the throne as a voyage that would supplement his studies; to which a facetious newspaper man replied that indeed the heir to the throne was study bent; that the prince loved women so much that he had gone out into the world to investigate the charms of every single nationality before returning to Bucharest.

Carol did study the women of the whole world—all the nationalities, all the colors.

On the tenth of May, 1921, Carol of Hohenzollern married the Princess Helen of Greece at Athens, and returned to Roumania amidst the hoorays and acclamations of the people.

It must be said here again that Carol had won considerable affection in the hearts of the people because of his escapades. The Roumanians were flattered to have such a virile man as their future King. There were people who believed that Carol had



settled down; that the heir to the throne had sown his wild oats and would now concentrate on the work before him. There was a lot of work to do. The country was on the verge of a revolution and on the brink of bankruptcy. Since it was known how actively Carol opposed Bratianu, it was hoped that his advent to the throne would see the end of the rule of that insufferable autocrat, that robber baron. In reality, however, Carol renewed his relations with Zizi immediately after his marriage and let things go as usual. I have already told that Jeanne Lambrino was a frequent guest at the palace of the princely pair, and that Helen of Greece had no objection to Carol's friendship with his former morganatic wife.

And then suddenly, from a clear sky, the Prince heir and Zizi Lambrino parted company. Marie's hand showed itself again. Zizi was told that unless she left Roumania, her child would disappear, but if she left instantly the royal family agreed to give her a monthly allowance. The daughter of General Lambrino knew with whom she was dealing and obeyed. The manner in which his mother handled this last phase of the Lambrino affair made Carol come to the conclusion that any peace between him and her was impossible. She had made up with Bratianu and Shtirbey was again her favorite.

To establish himself even more firmly in the



hearts of the people and to win the army to his side, to prepare himself well for the eventual struggle, Carol began to devote himself to the affairs of the army and to the establishing of public schools and public libraries in the urban and rural communities of the country. He even founded an institution to publish originals and translations of books to be distributed free or at small cost to the peasants of the country. Through Professor Jorga he ranged himself on the side of the Peasant Party; the only opposition of the Bratianu government.

The Queen was determined to acquire as much sympathy as she could. Carol and his mother fought for the favor of the people. The condition of the King was not improving. His days were numbered. The Bratianus saw themselves in danger. They knew what Carol's ascension to the throne would mean. In the measure that he felt himself secure, the Prince asserted himself more and more. The Peasant Party became more and more audacious. And when the Prime Minister once came to inform the prince heir that His Majesty's condition was dangerous, Carol told him that his information was gratuitous—that he was kept informed by the doctors attending his father and ordered Bratianu out of the room. The Prime Minister objected to the manner in which he was being treated.



"Get out, get out," cried Carol.

This incident did not tend to bring the two closer together. When the King survived that crisis, Bratianu began to work assiduously to rid himself of his future master. Queen Marie was in absolute agreement with Bratianu, Shtirbey and all of Carol's enemies. "We must get him out of the country."

Suddenly Carol's sober political and cultural activities were interrupted. He lost interest in the peasants and the citizens of Roumania. He lost interest in the Peasant Party. He had met a Madame Tampeano, the divorced wife of an officer in the Roumanian army. She had taken back her maiden name of Lupescu. Fascinated by the sensual charms of that red-haired woman, Carol neglected his affairs and devoted himself exclusively to the woman. It did not take long before the young lady's apartment became his real home, while the palace in which his wife lived was only of secondary importance.

Throwing discretion to the winds, Carol let himself be seen with the red-headed lady everywhere, regardless of the humiliation such an association inflicted upon his wife. To the entreaties of his friends the heir to the throne answered:

"I have only one life to live. I have never loved Helen and never will."

Princess Helen thought it convenient to leave the country to visit specialists who promised to cure her



sick eyes. She did that either because she wanted to avoid the daily humiliation to which she was subjected, or because she hoped that Carol would soon tire of his new amour.

Neither Queen Marie nor the Bratianus and the Shtirbeys did anything to separate the two lovers. The contrary is true. They did everything possible to bring them together publicly and show them to the world together. An active publicity campaign told the world that the Prince was enamoured of a red-headed Jewish woman, the daughter of a junk peddler.

Only those who understand how hated and despised the Jews are in Roumania will understand how this information worked against the interests of the heir to the throne. When Carol had married Zizi Lambrino, the Roumanians could not find it in their hearts to say anything against him. After all, he had married a Roumanian woman and the worst that might come of that match would be that a Roumanian woman would sit on the throne.

The mere fact that Carol had a fleeting passion for a Jewish woman did not, at first, militate against him. It had happened before. Many Roumanian men have had liasons with Jewish women. It was the fashion for impoverished officers of the army to marry the daughters of wealthy Jews. They got fat dowries. But the publicity campaign of the



Queen hinted that Carol was so enamoured of that Jewish woman, that daughter of the junk peddler, that he would not hesitate to divorce his wife and put Magda Lupescu on the throne beside him. Did the Roumanians want a Jewish Queen? A Jewish Queen in Roumania would have been more than the people could stand. Magda Lupescu was represented as the emissary of the Jews of all nations who had paid her bags of gold to entice the future King into her arms.

That the first meeting between Prince Carol and Magda Lupescu was not an accident—that the unseen hand of Shtirbey had put the red-headed woman in the path of the inflammable prince at a propitious moment, has been repeatedly told before. It was a masterful stroke. It doomed Carol.

Instead of retreating from under the glare of this publicity campaign, Carol again “shouldered his responsibilities.” Instead of shrinking from the light, he showed himself more and more frequently with the red-headed lady beside him. Marie knew how stubborn he was. She played on that string. She knew that the more they would try to separate him from her the stronger his opposition would be. His closest friends tried to interfere, to advise him, but he would not listen to them.

“If to be King means not to live one’s life as one wishes, I prefer life to a throne. I have the same





rights to happiness as the milkman has. No one is going to blackmail me out of what life has given me."

A manly reply, what?

When this reply of Carol's was brought to the ears of his father, the King ordered Madame Lupescu, in November, 1925, to leave the country. King Ferdinand was not in on the intrigue against his son. When Madame Lupescu objected and said that she was well enough where she was, that it was her country, she was told that she would avoid bloodshed if she left; that if she insisted in her attitude the Jews of the country would be slaughtered by the anti-Semites and that the government would be able to do nothing to stop the uprising.

Such threats were too much for her. She left despite Carol's entreaties. The whole world was informed of what had happened. The Queen's version of the affair was given the widest publicity.

For a while Carol bowed his head under the blow he had received. He had lost many friends. He had lost the support of the majority of his sympathizers and he knew with what eyes people now looked at him. He could gauge his position by the attitude of his mother, and of Barbu Shtirbey and the Bratianus. They laughed in his face. Servitors in the royal palace turned their backs on him.



The King continued to be very ill and refused to see Carol. Only one newspaper man, the editor of "The Epoca" had enough red blood in his veins to stand by the heir.

I am quoting here part of an article written by this man.

"I want to denounce that disgusting personality which can be felt everywhere but met nowhere, upon whom leans a political party for which he shares no responsibility. That man's name is Barbu Shtirbey.

"He is well known but few people have the courage to mention him by name. He has accomplices everywhere. He buys everything and sells everything. He can confer medals and honors on all those who have put themselves at his disposition and helped him in his secret enterprises. He has imposed silence on everybody, a special silence, an extraordinary silence. I want to tell the country, from one end to the other, that Barbu Shtirbey is responsible for all the evils that have befallen Roumania and its throne. Every citizen is the victim of his influence and his intrigues. This man knows neither law nor constitution. He knows only his own interests. No one has dared to denounce him until now. The Epoca will tell on every page what Shtirbey has done and is doing. And if we have to disappear. . . ."



And yet Carol soon saw himself so neglected that he thought it best to accept his mother's suggestion that he go to London to represent the crown at the funeral of Queen Alexandra. He was not only the heir to the throne, he was also the father of an heir to the throne, Prince Michael.

Upon his return from London, Madame Lupescu waited for him at the railroad station in Paris. A telegram published in the Roumanian newspapers announced that the two lovers had met there.

Queen Marie wrote a long letter to her son, reproaching him for his behavior and managed to have that letter published in all the papers.

Disgusted, Carol, who was being followed by detectives and reporters, went to Venice with Madame Lupescu.

What strange coincidence made him go to the same hotel to which his father had once gone with Mlle. Vacarescu? Unlike King Carol, King Ferdinand did not burst into the room to separate the two lovers. There was no Queen Elizabeth to stand by their side. But Carol received a severe and threatening letter from his father; a letter undoubtedly dictated by his mother and by Barbu Shtirbey, which the King had merely signed.

Carol answered, saying that if affairs continued to be what they were in Roumania, he was again willing to renounce his rights to the throne. "It



must be known who is to reign in Roumania—the Hohenzollerns or the Bratianus.”

King Ferdinand woke up to the fact that the absence of Carol had practically delivered him into the hands of his wife, Shtirbey and Bratianu. The trio treated him as a negligible quantity and with harshness. In the last stages of cancer, when he was suffering indescribable pain, he could not even obtain the services of a doctor, when he wanted one.

Queen Marie did not appear at the bedside of her sick husband for weeks at a time.

Princess Ileana was always with her mother.

Princess Elizabeth was busy with her own affairs as the wife of Prince Paul of Greece.

Mignon was Queen of Jugo-Slavia.

Nicholas, an irresponsible youth, did not show up at the palace for months.

Except for a few servants around him, the King never saw a human being.

His prime minister appeared only when he wanted him to sign a document.

King Ferdinand sent a friend of his, General Hiotto, to beg Carol to return to Roumania—to beg him in the name of a neglected father.

Carol refused to return. The last paragraph of his letter to King Ferdinand, the letter in which he renounced for the fourth time the Roumanian throne, read:



"I not only renounce the throne, but I renounce all the rights that I have, all the rights given to me by the Roumanian laws, over my child and over my wealth."

And to General Hiotto, Carol said:

"Tell my father that I will return to Roumania if he first asserts his rights as a king. He must drive out the Bratianus and Prince Shtirbey and he must put a curb on the Queen before I ever set foot again in that country."

By hook or crook, the Bratianus got hold of that letter, deleted from it certain passages, read it in open Parliament and delivered to the press the heir's definite renunciation of the throne.



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## CHAPTER SEVEN

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CAROL was hardly out of the country, and the publicity department had the affair well in hand, trumpeting the scandal all over the world, when Marie, Bratianu and Shtirbey and three other secretaries of state gathered at Sinaia to institute a regency to govern the country in the event that anything should happen to the King.

King Ferdinand's condition was precarious. The doctors had given up all hope of saving him, and his death was a question of months, weeks or days.

That very same day Bratianu, Shtirbey, and Marie had talked to the King about a regency. Ferdinand opposed their plans strenuously. He argued that he did not consider the heir to the throne's step as definitive, and that he still hoped to convince Carol to come back and take his place at the foot of the throne.

One can easily imagine the turmoil the King's statement aroused in the Marie, Bratianu, Shtirbey trio. After they left the King, they, and the three



ministers decided to name a regency, and even chose the people who were to take part in it—Prince Nicholas, the patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church, and the president of the Supreme Court. This regency was to act immediately upon the death of Ferdinand, in the name of Prince Michael, Carol's son, who was to be declared officially the heir to the throne.

The following day, two letters were read in Parliament. One contained Carol's abdication. The other was from the king who accepted Carol's resignation from the throne and also added a great deal of his own bitterness about the prince's conduct.

People who had not been in favor of Carol until then, were inclined to side with him after the king's letter was read; they were inclined to side with the prince heir because they did not believe that his father had written that letter. There were people who were convinced that the Bratianu, Marie, Shtirbey trio had composed the letter and that the king had signed it without knowing what it contained. It was beyond belief that a father should find it in his heart to paint his son as black as Ferdinand painted Carol in that short letter.

The power of the Peasant Party dates from that day. The leaders of that party were the only ones who opposed the regency and refused to vote on Prince Carol's renunciation of the throne. They



also refused to vote the proclamation of Prince Michael as heir to the throne.

However, the Bratianu plans were ratified by a tremendous majority. Yet Carol could boast that he had a political party on his side.

Whatever the political direction and political aim of the Peasant Party had been before then, it now became the accepted representative of the exiled heir. It became an axiom that the Peasant Party would recall the heir to Bucharest if it ever came into power.

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With Carol out of the way and the danger of a new power looming strongly on the political firmament, the Bratianu-Shtirbey clique began to stuff its pockets more hastily than it had done before. They realized that their days were numbered.

To speak of order and government in those days would be idle. The army was disorganized, hungry and naked. The railroads were disorganized and practically at a standstill. Industry and commerce were things of the past. Public instruction, education, was nothing but a fiction. No public servant was paid. It speaks well for the innate decency of the plain people that internal conditions did not get much worse than they were. The people at the head of the government were setting the worst pos-





sible example. Graft, bakshish, became a national institution. No one paid taxes or duties. You came to an agreement with the tax collector and what you gave him was all you owed or ever paid.

My family and I were on the way back from Constanza, on the Black Sea, to Braila, on the Danube. At the railroad station the man behind the partition looked at me as at a strange animal when I asked for four first class tickets. Suddenly he bel-  
lowed:

"Tickets? We have no tickets. They haven't sent me any tickets for weeks." He closed the window in my face. I could hear him muttering: "Tickets! Crazy people. Tickets. Railroad tickets he asks for!"

When the train arrived, the second and third class cars were overcrowded, but the first class cars were almost empty, except for a few passengers.

We sat down in a compartment occupied by a lone gentleman. I recognized him. He was a Congressman. I told him of our plight and that I could not buy transportation tickets.

"That doesn't matter," he said. "You don't have to buy railroad tickets. Just give the conductor a few dollars."

While we were talking the conductor passed by. In the presence of this legislator of the country, I gave the railroad man the bribe. He took it,



thanked me, bowed to the Congressman and departed.

I turned to my fellow traveler.

"How can you excuse your conduct?" I asked. "You advised bribery—you, a legislator of the country!"

He smiled.

"The conductor will split this money a half dozen ways. Everybody will get something out of your money. When you buy a railroad ticket you don't know who gets the money. The conductors and engineers don't get it—they haven't been paid in months."

Alas! It was only too true. The government had even kept C.O.D. money paid by merchants on wares that had arrived on trains from other countries.

The government officials and the people working in industries and enterprises which were government monopolies, were sympathetic to the Bratianus and the Shtirbeys. At no other time had they been able to loot as freely as during that particular period. No questions were asked. One took what came into one's hands. The army and the school teachers, however, did not fare so well. They were not able to do better that way than when they were paid their salaries, so they joined the Peasant Party.

Meanwhile, Prince Carol and Magda Lupescu



were defying the world. Carol, master of a considerable income on which neither Bratianu nor Shtirbey could lay their hands, paraded his red-headed mistress quite ostentatiously from Venice to Paris and from Paris to Deauville and back again. They traveled in open automobiles. Madame Lupescu's furs became so well known along the French roads that even children could pick her out from among the thousands of cars that passed by on Sundays.

"La Princesse Rouge. La Belle Juive. La Reine."

Carol and Madame Lupescu were seen at cafés, cabarets and gambling places. The couple gathered a number of gay friends about them; actors, actresses, musicians, newspaper men, flatterers and a few would-be statesmen who had always kept on the fringe of political parties.

The opinion of Roumanian politicians did not affect the opinion of the Parisians. To them Carol was another one of the many royal exiles living in their city. They were good spenders. They were gay. They added tone, more attraction to the great city. They attracted tourists.

The Prince and Madame Lupescu, or Madame la Princesse, as she began to be called, were treated respectfully in all the cafés; with that condescension waiters show toward people who have finally come to their senses and realized that life's chief joys were



few and easy to acquire. The red-headed lady was a good eater and had discriminating taste for wines and liqueurs.

Yet after a time, that sort of life began to pall on Carol. His real feeling toward Magda Lupescu will forever remain a secret to the world. It is possible he did not believe what everybody seemed to know; that Magda had been a set-up, that she was put in his path by his mother and his political enemies, to injure him, to make him ridiculous in the eyes of the people. Any other man, having found out how he had been tricked, would have made short shrift of the affair. Carol acted as if he did not know, or as if it did not matter.

When he was in his cups, he was not always polite and affectionate to Magda Lupescu. To make up for these rare instances of ill-mannered behavior in public he gave her costly jewels which she exhibited just as promptly. Dressmakers and furriers reaped rich harvests after every quarrel between the two lovers.

People who watched Carol closely noticed that he began to seek the company of other women. He began to like a little more noise. He began to drink stronger wines, to sit longer at dinner tables, and to break out in sudden rages. After gay parties, he smashed glasses and dishes. At other times he smiled wistfully, closed his eyes and said the



most scathing things about his own family. He developed quite a tongue that way. His bon mots and his wit became the talk of certain circles in Paris.

And then those "fringe" statesmen began to approach him a little closer and talk to him about his chances of assuming the throne when his father should die.

At first Carol would not hear of it. But after a while he began to listen.

Emissaries were sent back to Bucharest to establish liaisons with representatives of the army and of the Peasant Party. Though Professor Jorga was vacillating, and was sometimes a Carolist, and at other times an anti-Carolist, he was valuable as a point of rally. There were a few other men who had had a hand in shaping Carol's grand return to the throne.

The army was won over rather easily. Carol promised a military dictatorship. Carol would put the army in power. What army in the history of the world has not believed that the power to govern the country should be vested in it?

I was told that Magda Lupescu kept certain people informed of everything that was going on in and out of her house.

There are people who are convinced that Madame



Lupescu had been won over completely by Carol's love for her; that she was devoted to him to the point of self-abnegation. My informers said that Madame Lupescu was willing to give Carol up if that would give him a better chance to ascend the throne. Yet Carol never trusted her fully. Madame Lupescu never knew more than Carol wanted her to know.

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Meanwhile in Bucharest the physical condition of King Ferdinand was growing worse and worse. He was in the last stages of cancer and he was drinking himself to the grave.

The Bratianus were becoming more and more hated and feared as their rapacity increased.

The peasants were beginning to protest louder and louder and the size of the Peasant Party was assuming dangerous proportions. The army was clearly not on the side of the Bratianus.

Queen Marie saw what might happen if the King should die suddenly. If Carol came back on a wave of public enthusiasm her reign and that of Shtirbey and Bratianu would immediately come to an end.

If Carol did not return and Bratianu and Shtirbey should feel absolutely secure, Marie knew that at the death of her husband, her day of power would also



come to an end. The odium of her son's behavior had been made to reflect upon the mother. The counter propaganda had disseminated widely the stories of the Queen's behavior. The Roumanian has considerable tolerance for all normal sexual appetites, but people with imagination hinted at affairs not quite so normal.

Marie attempted to smash her way into the regency that was to begin to function at the death of her husband. She argued that Nicholas was too young for such an office, that he could not very well represent the royal household because of his youth and frivolity.

"He is as good as your other offspring, Madame," Bratianu opposed her.

She told them that foreign bankers would not lend the country any money as long as she was not in power. Her arguments were laughed off.

"We don't want foreign capital."

When she argued a little more forcibly, Bratianu and Shtirbey reminded Her Majesty that her private fortune was in their hands.

"Madame! We have heard enough."

"Madame, Roumania is tired of feeding your dissolute family."

Bratianu and Shtirbey posed as the righteously indignant patriots.

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Some twenty years ago, when I first began writing stories about Roumania, I was frequently asked whether such a country really existed. Those who were better informed believed that it was a Turkish province, and others thought it was one of Austria's dependencies.

For twenty years I have told stories of the peasants, of their sufferings, their labors, their habits and customs in the regions I know so well; along the Carpathian mountains and along the Danube River.

I have spoken to audiences of hundreds and audiences of thousands about my rivers and my mountains and that section of the Black Sea near which I was born. I have told stories of the tremendous fecundity and the unheard of endurance of the people, of the fertility of the land and of the inconceivable wealth in oils and metal ores, coal and amber lying right under the spade and the pickaxe. I have spoken and written about the soul of the peasant, of his folklore, of his music and his proverbs—so wise and so old.

And suddenly, as though in a whirlwind, Queen Marie's blurbs began to flutter over the world. Her publicity bureau sent out reams of copy about the Queen and the King and the prince and the princelings, and dozens of photographs of each of them in all poses. The desks of every newspaper were deluged.





At first it was hot stuff. Queens always were hot stuff in this most democratic of countries. The stuff became hotter and hotter. Little intimate stories of the Queen and the princes were being secretly divulged to the world; in ten thousand mimeographed copies at a time.

How the Queen rises. How she goes to bed. What she wears. What she eats. What she drinks. How she loves her subjects. How they love her. When Roumania entered the war on the side of the allies newspaper headlines announced to the world that "Queen Marie's armies are ready to win the war." King Ferdinand signed a separate peace with the Germans but it was Queen Marie that made her triumphal entry into her capital.

After the exile of Prince Carol, the clipping bureau of the Queen's publicity office did not have much to show for their labors. The press of the world seemed to be off royalty, Roumanian royalty, for a while. It had had more than enough of that brand. Not one item of ten sent out was published. And the photographs, even though in the most interesting poses, destined and calculated to take the American people by storm—the Queen holding up her grandson; the Queen in military uniform, the Queen in nurse's uniform, the Queen being acclaimed by the people, the Queen writing her memoirs—all these interesting photographs, were left unused by the



unfeeling editors. Something had to be done about it.

Carol's exile, the details of it, and the stories which followed the event, left a bitter taste in the mouths of the American newspaper readers.

The Austrian, the German and some of the French papers made acrid comments about what had happened behind the scenes. Then the Queen discovered that though she could buy space and favors in the European press, the American press would not be corrupted. In most of the French and Austrian papers "space" is for sale to whosoever pays. Countries can buy space as cheaply as actors, singers, concertists and corset manufacturers. Praise is paid for at so much per line.

Following an exposure of corruption and cruelty in the army, Panait Istrati, the celebrated French writer of Roumanian origin, wrote some virulent articles in the radical French press. The "League of the Rights of Man" sent a commission to investigate the iniquities Panait had described. Henri Barbusse, the French writer of "Under Fire" fame, and Maître Torres were of that commission. Instead of putting the facts in the matter at the disposal of these men, for them to investigate and report, those in power saw fit to encourage in Bucharest, one hundred feet from the royal palace, loud manifestations against the investigators.



"Out with the scoundrels. Send them out of the country. To death with them."

Barbusse, after being beaten, had to be hustled out of the hotel through a back door by his friend Dr. Lupu, the former Secretary of State. Still the League succeeded in obtaining information damaging to the very gentlemen who had wanted to dispose of them and the affair in their own way.

The press of the world preferred to carry items on this matter rather than the court news and gossip with which they were deluged by the publicity bureau of the palace.

The people of Roumania began to reproach the Shtirbey-Bratianu-Marie government for having involved them in such a mess. The Queen was in hot water.

The publicity managers, the Queen's staff, and the Queen herself put their heads together. Something had to be done immediately to regain the sympathy of the world; for Marie had never realized that she had been overdoing her publicity stunt. Because of the unrest in the country, the government could not obtain the loan it had projected in Europe and America.

King Ferdinand was not expected to live more than a few months at most. At his demise, little Michael was to be proclaimed King. The Queen had determined to dominate the regency, to rule, to gov-



ern. It was a matter of life and death to her. The Roumanian people owed her that. She had swung them on the side of the Allies. Because of her wisdom the territory had been enlarged four-fold and the population of Roumania had been tripled. Bratianu, Shtirbey and company were betraying her. The Carolist movement was becoming stronger and stronger. The Peasant Party was gathering strength.

The sudden drop in the amount of printed matter that appeared about her in the press of the world hurt her vanity deeply, and was disturbing her plans. The dissatisfaction of her own people was troubling her. Jonel Bratianu had changed his tone. When she disagreed with him, he told her bluntly:

“Madame, another word and I shall sweep you and your family out of the country and make an end of the Hohenzollern regime here.”

She had made him rich. He had no intention of sharing his power with the Queen—with a woman.

He censored the “family” for its amorous scandals.

“Madame, will you put your house in order? You are making the country the butt of ridicule of the whole world.”

The Queen knew that Bratianu was no man to play with. He and Shtirbey were all too powerful.

The Queen awoke one morning and announced to her publicity staff that she had had a dream.

This wilful, strong woman is very superstitious



and had for many years lent her ear to a mystic—half charlatan, half saint, the writer Hajdeu, who had frequently come running at midnight to the court to tell her what he had seen in the stars. Marie too had dreams; when it was convenient.

In that particular dream Marie had seen herself rise over the sea on a wave of people.

It meant only one thing. She had to sail to America.

Her sudden decision amazed even her most intimate friends. It was so unexpected. She elaborated quickly upon that proposed tour. While in America she would gain the sympathy of the Americans for the Roumanians. She would obtain great loans. Foreign capital would be made to flow into the country for the exploitation of its resources. She would work wonders. She would put Roumania on its feet. The Americans loved her already. She would obtain greater love yet—millions of dollars. Tens of millions.

Bratianu and Shtirbey did not want her to go. The doctors, urged by Bratianu, told her that the King was very ill and did not have long to live.

That information, instead of deterring her from her purpose, acted as an incentive.

She knew the American people. A sentimental people. Look at their movies. Look at their novels. And they were rich. And generous. They would



feel with her in her moment of sorrow. They would be sympathetic to the poor widowed Queen. They would cry with her. She would appear as a saint in their eyes—a saint who put her country above her private sufferings.

They would say: "She is going everywhere, and traveling over foreign countries to enlist help for her subjects."

"Instead of being at her husband's bedside to close his eyes, she thinks of her people."

"There goes the widowed Queen of Roumania."

Two months—that would be enough.

Was it luck, or was it pre-arranged? Just then a wealthy man at the other end of the world, in the state of Washington, asked the Queen whether she would be willing to come, at his expense, to inaugurate a library. That library could not exist unless the Queen of Roumania inaugurated it.

Would she?

The affair was clinched there and then. When the news was broadcast that the Roumanian Queen intended to visit America shortly, that she was indeed on her way and would stop only for a short time in Paris to replenish her wardrobe, syndicates sent their representatives to secure contracts for the fruit of the Queen's pen. They wanted world rights for what she would have to say about the United States and its people. Queen Marie was coming to



look us over and give us the benefit of her wisdom.

In an article that appeared recently in a woman's magazine, Zoe Beckley, the writer, describes one of her business transactions with Queen Marie. Poor Zoe did not know how to talk to a Queen about prices; about such prosaic and unqueenly matters as dollars and cents. Miss Beckley tells how she began to talk haltingly about the Queen's charities, to which the money was supposed to go. But the Queen interrupted her:

"Now let's talk business. I am a professional writer, am I not? What will you pay?"

Zoe rather liked the abrupt manner. It simplified matters. But it did not in the least raise the esteem in which she had held crowned heads until then.

One of the heads of a syndicate told me what a hard-headed business woman Marie is. She exacted every farthing from every transaction; yet after he had secured her signature to the contract and had given her a check for the exclusive rights to her articles, he learned that she had signed another contract and received another check from another syndicate for the exclusive rights to her work.

Those who knew the temper of the world just then, Roumanian representatives in different countries, telegraphed and cabled and begged that Marie be compelled either to abandon or to postpone her enterprise.



But the Queen had made up her mind. Nothing could stop her from sailing to America. The King was on his death bed. She had to have a place in the regency.

In due time, Marie and her retinue, accompanied by Princess Ileana, Prince Nicholas, the "Gray Eminence," and Lois Fuller, made their bow to New York.

The mayor gave her one of the keys to the city. Our well-dressed official receptioneer shook hands with Her Majesty. The sirens of the boats whistled. Horns of automobiles blew furiously. There were pictures of Queen Marie, the prince and princess, and Lois Fuller in every store on Fifth Avenue and every display window in the side streets. The Queen's photographs were signed in large letters with that characteristic stroke of hers.

There was a quarrel between two photographers. Each one of them had bought exclusive rights to make and sell these photographs of the Queen and her entourage.

When the Queen was escorted to her suite, at a fashionable hotel, officialdom and unofficialdom was bowed in before Her Majesty. The Queen handed out wisdom by the bushel and bon mots and platitudes by the ton. She had a great time.

That night, when the Queen saw the newspapers, she was furious beyond words. Valentino was being





buried on the same day, and Marie shared the honors of the front pages with the descriptions of his funeral.

Only enemies could have done that! Only they could have arranged the funeral of that actor for the day she arrived in this country. Wasn't there anything that could be done about it? Shame. Shame. To share honors with a dead actor! A Queen.

The publicity bureau tried to remedy matters. But Valentino's death seemed to be an important event to the very same class of people who had so vociferously acclaimed the Queen. Valentino is dead. Long live the Queen!

New York went Marie mad. The Queen was seen everywhere. She was popular. She was democratic. This democracy of ours was continually marveling at her democratic behavior. She was a good fellow. She let herself be photographed with this, that and the other one. She spoke to everybody. She was great. She dressed well. Her peasant costumes were simply delicious. And she was a Queen.

A few days later her endorsements of creams and cosmetics appeared in street car advertisements, in newspapers and magazines. She too guaranteed that it was better to reach for a Lucky than a sweet. Well. But she did it for her charities. New York was sure of that. She didn't touch the money. Of course not. She did it for her people. For her poor



people. She thought only of her poor people. Even now her husband was very ill. Wonderful devotion to her people. Poor Marie. She wasn't lucky with her oldest son! She deserved better, didn't she? She had hoped he would take the burden of government on his shoulders. He had shirked his duty. She would try to convince him on her return voyage but it was rather hopeless. And Prince Nicholas—well, see for yourself—just a gay youth!

To show how versatile she was, the Metropolitan Opera House was engaged for Lois Fuller and her pupils and it was announced that the American dancer would execute a legend written by the Queen. Execute is the right word.

She was a Queen, an actress, a writer, a poet and a musician, as well as a few other things.

"She could give Barnum aces and spades."

That Lois Fuller affair was an unfortunate undertaking for the Queen. Suspecting that New Yorkers would simply kill themselves to witness that social performance, the gentlemen of Marie's own entourage bought the tickets and attempted to resell them at ten times the original price.

"The Americans are naive. They will pay anything to see a Queen."

Some newspaperman got wind of the affair. The Department of Charities interfered and demanded an accounting. It had been announced that the



profits from this performance were to go to charity.

The press cried "Scandal."

The people stayed away in large numbers. Disagreeable things were being whispered about the Queen and the dancer.

At the end of that performance for charity there was not enough money to cover the expenses of Lois Fuller, her pupils, the theatre, the publicity and the music. The charities owed the dancers several thousand dollars.

One of our columnists, Heywood Broun, parodied one of the Queen's articles in the column next to hers in the same paper. Another newspaper commented editorially on her articles on free love.

Vaudevillians began to wisecrack about "Our Marie." Skits on the Queen, her consort and her entourage, were being hastily put together. Moving picture magnates began to bid for her services. She took their bids seriously and for a while it looked as if Pola Negri might have a serious competitor.

The Queen rolled on, in slow stages, toward her destination, to the State of Washington, in a car especially placed at her disposal by one of the railroad companies. But another railroad company refused to extend the courtesy and demanded pay—cold cash.

It is needless to repeat what the whole world knows of that trip. Those who had claimed the



privilege of acting as the Queen's hosts and covered the expenses of her trip dropped away one by one and withdrew their promises.

Scandal followed upon scandal.

Reporters were thrown off railroad cars.

Princess Ileana got herself talked about with a young military cadet.

Queen Marie had become too friendly with an American newspaper man.

The whole affair went from bad to worse: from the ridiculous to the more ridiculous.

It was a fiasco before they reached Chicago. The proposed triumphal tour took on the appearance of a return trip of stranded barnstormers.

Queen Marie waited for the cable that was to tell her that the King had died. This alone could have changed the wave of ridicule into one of sympathy.

The cable did not come. The momentum of the ridicule increased day by day. Her articles and endorsements had become the laughing stock of the country.

She dragged Prince Nicholas and Princess Ileana into a mire of scandal and disreputable mud.

When things looked blackest, when she had been told at a bankers' meeting that she ought to know the laws of her country before she appealed for foreign capital; that she ought to know that foreign capital was neither welcomed nor permitted in her



country, the merciful news arrived. It was not as good as she had expected. The cable told that the King was very ill and that he wished her to return home immediately.

Few people will ever know what a merciful message that cable was to the Queen. One of the tricked newspaper syndicates had started an action at law to recover. They were making ready to seize the Queen's trunks. She had come here as a private individual and not as a guest of the nation. She was legally as liable to arrest as any other individual.

The whole Carol scandal was revived and aired again. The more the Queen tried to explain the affair the more ridiculous and contemptible she appeared. When she spoke of marital fidelity people laughed. And now the vaudevillians had seized upon the Ileana affair. Marie's own daughter, the Queen of Jugo-Slavia, was quoted to have remarked, "Why does mother promenade that Mlle. Shtirbey over the world?"

It was a shaft at Ileana. The press of the world seized upon it. Ileana's paternity was discussed everywhere.

And still the King continued to live; beyond the time allotted to him by his doctors.

Queen Marie had come here on the blasts of trumpets and fanfares and had planned to return



home on the wave of enthusiasm and force her way into power. The Bratianus and Shtirbeys would not dare to refuse her anything after a triumphal tour in America. She would be Queen of Roumania de jure and de facto. America had to help her to the throne.

Instead of that she turned home a ridiculous figure. She had made the whole country ridiculous. For some unexplained reason there was nobody on the platform of the station to receive her at Bucharest. It was said later that those of her household who had gone to meet her had gone to the wrong railroad station.

The King lived on. They had tricked Marie. They had called her back in time to dedramatize her return. The Bratianus saw to it that the King remained technically alive until they were ready to announce his death. Everything was prepared, Pronunciamentos were on the walls; machine guns were at every corner; the army occupied the strategic points. The funeral route was mapped out and the speeches were prepared while the King was still technically alive.

Queen Marie's tour of the United States ended in a grand fiasco. Her greatest achievement here was that whenever the word Roumania is mentioned, people immediately think of its comic opera royal household, of the disgraceful conduct of the Queen,



the King, the princes and princesses and the whole train that follows.

It is difficult to convince an American that besides the royal aggregate there are eighteen millions of people eager to make their land produce; eager to drill more oil wells into the bowels of the earth; eager to work and live like human beings.

Instead of holding her own in the industrial world, Roumania holds her own in Hollywood, on Broadway and in the comic papers.



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## CHAPTER EIGHT

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WHILE in Vienna, during the days of the so-called revolution, I met several newspapermen who were marking time before setting out for Bucharest. There were two Americans, an Italian, a Frenchman and a German as well as several camera men waiting at the same hotel with me.

I had been on a long automobile trip in the Alps and had not been in touch with Roumanian affairs.

"What's all this rush towards Roumania?" I asked one of the American newspapermen.

"We're waiting for the Roumanian king's funeral," he answered.

"Is he dead?" I questioned.

"They have not yet told the world," the Italian newspaper man answered.

I left Vienna hurriedly, stepped over the Hungarian border and took the first train for Budapest. In the capital city of Hungary I scanned every newspaper. There wasn't even a hint of King Ferdinand's impending death.





I arrived in Bucharest towards midnight, elated that I had stolen a march on the newspapermen I had left in the Vienna hotel. It was still too early to go to sleep, and so I went out for a walk. At the stroke of midnight, military patrols appeared in the street and I noticed that two soldiers were left at every corner. My promenade towards the center of the town was barred by the gendarmes who bade me return to my hotel.

"It is too late for any decent man to be abroad," they told me.

I wondered about the military display at midnight, and wondered what prompted the police to be so anxious about the decency of the citizens of Bucharest; midnight being the breakfast hour for a good many in the capital of Roumania.

In the morning the riddle was solved. One of the newspapers, only one, carried the news of King Ferdinand's death on its front page.

Though all the morning papers appear usually at the same hour, the opposition papers of that morning were late. One of the ministers was also the proprietor of one of the newspapers. And since it was he who had to give out the information, he took care to give it first to his own paper to have a scoop on the others.

I shall never forget how people looked at me when I questioned the ethics of the minister's behavior.



"And how was it possible," I asked, "to keep such a thing secret? Did not your reporters know that the King was ill, that his end was expected at any moment? I should think you would have had reporters stationed at the gates of the palace."

They shrugged their shoulders and called me a naive American.

"The information had to be given out officially. Do you understand?"

Later on I was told that the King had been dead a good many hours, if not a good many days before his death was made public. The news had leaked out the week before and foreign correspondents were waiting on the border line for the information they had been told to expect.

The supposition that the King had been dead many days before the public was informed sounded a little wild to me, despite my knowledge of the intrigues and machinations that had been going on in Roumanian court and political circles for some years. I refused to believe that such a thing would be dared by any one.

But when I saw the face and the hands of the dead ruler of Roumania stretched out on the catafalque, I had to admit to myself that my informants had told the truth. Those hands, shrunken to the size of the hands of a little child, had been dead longer than the twenty-four hours that had elapsed between



the announcement and my view of the body of what had once been my King. The head had shrunk down to the size of a small fist. It looked like a mummified head. It could not possibly have been living twenty-four hours before.

On the steps of every public building, schools, postoffices, banks, administrative buildings, stood soldiers with bristling machine guns ready for action. There were posters on every wall announcing the death of the King, and at the same time telling the population how to behave until after the funeral. Flags were to be draped in black. It was expressly forbidden to play any musical instrument, or to have any music in restaurants or cabarets, until after the funeral.

Flags draped in black were hung from every window. The militia, from the common soldiery up, wore black bands on their sleeves. The gates and doors of the palace were draped in black. All the outward manifestations of mourning were there.

Yet no one seemed to mourn. The city of Bucharest was under strict martial law as a result of the death of the King. There was no question of mourning. The people I spoke to were divided into two factions. Some said that the military manifestation was unnecessary, that it would create a bad impression on foreigners; and others maintained that Jonel Bratianu was right in taking no chances.



"He does not intend to make the funeral of the King an opportunity for the dissatisfied elements to seize power."

Parliament held a brief session the day after the announcement of the King's death. Jonel Bratianu read the last letter written by the deceased in which among other dispositions, he forbade Prince Carol's entry into the country—even for the funeral.

Again the mark was overshot. People refused to believe that that letter had been written by the King. Some refused even to believe that he had signed it. It was impossible to believe that Jonel Bratianu could have sunk so low as to think that others would believe him.

Men turned their heads toward the Queen. She could not possibly allow such a thing to happen. Why didn't she interfere? Why didn't she demand special permission from Parliament, if that was necessary, that her oldest son should be allowed to come to the funeral of his father?

And when she had done nothing, people were convinced that she was a party to that intrigue, that it was of her making.

"The English woman has done it."

"The English woman has no heart."

The bristling machine guns, the street patrolling soldiers, and the loaded guns in the barracks were not there because of fear of public uprising, but as a



demonstration against Carol; should he attempt to brave the interdiction.

There were rumors that he had come secretly as far as the borderline where he was asked to return. His best friends were sent to persuade him not to attempt to enter Roumania by force; if he wanted to avoid bloodshed at his father's funeral. That was the alternative that was put to him. If he entered the country in some way, the Bratianus would not hesitate to slaughter his followers.

Meanwhile, my foreign press friends had arrived at the hotel.

The people from the outlying towns and villages were beginning to pour into Bucharest.

The streets filled with people. Newspapers were already publishing photographs of Queen Marie in mourning clothes. She looked well in them. She was not going to let such an opportunity slip. Her other costumes had become rather too well known. Widow's weeds had never been essayed before.

Next in order came photographs of the newly proclaimed King Michael, a darling chubby little boy, and photographs of his mother, Princess Helen. There were at least a half dozen photographs of the Queen for every one of her grandson and daughter-in-law.

That night the newspaper correspondents gathered at the bar of the hotel, rather distressed that there



was no place to go—that all the gay places had been closed.

“Heavens,” said the Italian correspondent, “are we to be in Bucharest and stay sober and good?”

I shrugged my shoulders. The law had been laid down. The cabarets and drinking places were closed. The bright lights had been extinguished. The bar of the hotel was the only place open of which I knew. My friends would have to be satisfied with that.

Then a Roumanian newspaper man joined us. The American correspondent, more enterprising than the others, edged close and began to ply him with questions. Did he know any place where the evening could be spent more agreeably than at the bar of a hotel?

“Why certainly,” the young man answered. “I know a dozen places.”

“And will there be music?” the American questioned.

“Of course.”

Five minutes later, a taxi, into which we had all crowded, stopped in front of one of the well known open air cabarets of Bucharest. The windows and the shutters and the doors to the street were draped with black and closed, but within the crowd was as large as usual. A hundred or more young officers frolicked with their young lady friends, drinking,



singing and applauding the gypsy musicians; despite the mourning bands on their arms. It was bootleg gayety and bootleg music and bootleg everything; and they seemed to enjoy it hugely.

The owner of the cabaret, a supporter of the Bra-tianus, did not worry about police interference. He was angry that the other cabaret owners had been given the same privilege, though he contributed yearly more to the Liberal funds than they did.

"Such an opportunity comes once in a lifetime. Look at the crowds of people who have come to Bucharest. They should all be here in my place. The hotels are full of strangers. There ought to be some means of getting to them and telling them that Bucharest has not died just because the King is dead."

We visited other cabarets that same night, and they were as crowded as this first one. The prices had gone up a bit. Somehow the visiting strangers had discovered that all was going on as usual behind the closed windows and doors. The officers were the most conspicuous everywhere, and the gayest. Always vain of their uniforms, they were even more so now, because of that black band which gave them distinction.

"But really, aren't you mourning the King at all?" I asked the cabaret owners.

"Of course we are. But what has that to do with



it?" they said. "There are lots of strangers in town. They are all anxious to eat and drink and have a good time. It is our business to provide for that. It is childish to have forbidden it."

And on second thought, one gentleman added:

"I suppose it is well to have forbidden it for the lower class of cabarets, on the fringe of the town."

"And Carol," I asked, "what about Carol?"

"Well," one cabaret keeper answered, "I hope he does not disturb this affair. We are against it. It will be bad for business. Bratianu was right."

The owner of a department store fired the chief of the hat department because he had not provided enough silk hats for the occasion. The man, who had served in the same store at the death of King Carol had forgotten that Roumania had become three times as large and did not realize that there would be three times as many officials who would need silk hats to follow the funeral.

My own hotel keeper raised my room rent.

"Why?" I argued.

"Because the King is dead. That doesn't happen very often. Besides, your windows are on the street. You will see the funeral pass by."

I wondered why the funeral would pass by that particular part of the town.

He looked at me smilingly and asked:

"Do you know who owns this hotel?"





The following day, the number of machine guns in the street had been doubled. There was an additional set of pronunciamientos on the walls of the city. Rumors were flying back and forth with great insistence that Carol and his friends would indeed make a bid for power. Jonel Bratianu had the King's last letter published in the newspapers, and added a few words of his own about what would happen if anything went contrary to the dead King's wishes.

No, he had no interest in the affair. He was merely carrying out the last wishes of his King.

No, he was not a vengeful man. Personally he did not care whether Carol came or not. He was carrying out the last will of his master. Yet twice as many machine guns were necessary in the streets to carry out that will, all the cannon had to be pointed toward the palace, and the muzzles of the guns had to be directed towards one point. The Queen and the royal household were in complete agreement with him.

Was there anybody who dared say anything to the contrary?

If Carol was a real patriot and loved his country and his people he would not attempt to come home just then.

Poor Roumania had suffered enough. It was too



bad that the coffin of the dead King should have to be spattered with the blood of his people.

After that the rumors about Carol's return subsided. Pictures of the dowager Queen, of King Michael and of Queen Mother Helen filled all the papers and were distributed with full hands to foreign newspaper correspondents. But the telegrams and cables that were sent out were censored so heavily that nothing beyond the fact that the King had died and that there was to be a burial in a day or so was allowed to percolate over the border. Of the internal condition of the country; of the attitude of the people, of the aspect of Roumania at that time, not a word was permitted to go out.

Correspondents were permitted to say that the King had died; that he would be buried; that Queen Marie mourned him deeply (photographs of Queen Marie in mourning would follow); that Michael had already been proclaimed King and that Queen Mother Helen was a fine mother and promised to take good care of the child.

Needless to say that newspaper correspondents went to the Hungarian border and sent telegrams from there.

I shall never forget the funeral as it passed by my window.

The false attempt at imposing pomp.



Soldiers passing in prescribed parade.

Women in their best afternoon dress bending over windows and balconies.

Officers in parade uniform, their swords bowed, looking up and exchanging greetings with their women friends as they passed by. Some of them throwing gallant kisses.

Jonel Bratianu himself, beneath my window, at the curb, watching the funeral as it passed by, checking up on everything.

Somebody cried out, "Long live King Carol!" He was smothered by policemen and detectives who dragged him away, more dead than alive, while the funeral procession passed on.

A woman protested against the cruelty with which the Carol enthusiast had been beaten, and was knocked down in turn.

Policemen in uniform and detectives paced up and down the streets, over which the cortège passed, and told the people to be silent, that there were machine guns everywhere.

I caught a brief glimpse of the royal household as it passed by in a heavily curtained automobile.

A few more outbreaks, a few more people smothered just as quickly.

Jonel Bratianu and his brother Vintila, the prime minister and minister of interior, were directing the police and the detectives instead of following the



funeral carriage. They left nothing to chance, those two. They had confidence only in themselves.

When the military force and the official force had spent its convoy, the people, following the funeral, passed by.

Groups of barefoot women; wives and mothers of those who had fallen in the war.

Groups of barefoot old peasants; long grey hair hanging over their shoulders, bare-footed, bare-headed and in tatters.

War veterans, and the fathers of those who had fallen in the war.

And then the riffraff of the town.

The peasants, the old men and the old women, were the only ones who really mourned their King. The others—generals, officers and statesmen, took the funeral as an opportunity to display their costumes and their power.

I shall never forget the sudden noise in the street after the funeral had passed. Had it not been for the machine guns on the streets, the King's funeral might have become the occasion for a general holiday.

The street vendors acted like on fair days.

The wine houses, the inns, were filled to the doors.

While the funeral carriage was still inching slowly to the railroad station, on its way to the Car-



pathian mountains, the impatient gypsies scraped their fiddles in the wine places.

Many of the black flags had come down from stores and homes. For even the simplest minded realized the ridiculous contradiction between the signs of mourning and the holiday spirits of the citizens.

There were a few more street fights. Heavy fisted policemen swooped down on a group of innocent Moslems who were discussing an affair of their own in the street.

The limp bodies of these poor Albanians were left on the ground after the uniformed fools had finished with them. I saw the battered heads swell under my eyes. They puffed out. Discoloration set in.

I dragged one of the policemen off the chest of one of the men. He was stamping on it and dancing.

"But why did you do that?" I asked the man of the law. "You could not possibly have understood what they said. These men did not speak in Roumanian. Do you speak Albanian?"

"Well, exactly. That's why we had the little trouble. I did not understand what they said. I must understand everything. We have to be on our guard," the policeman answered wisely.

The night of the funeral was one of grand revelry. The terraces of cafés and restaurants were filled



with people. Not a gypsy who could scrape a bow on guts remained idle. Wine and champagne flowed freely. Not because Bucharest was glad that the King had died. Not that the inhabitants felt so gay because some one who had oppressed them was no longer among the living. That was not the reason.

It was because those at the head of the government had given no sign of genuine mourning. It was because threatening machine guns were there. People needed some outlet from this repression.

Watching the boisterousness and explosiveness of the people, I realized that the Bratianus had been wise to organize that military display. Had the Carolists been men of courage, had they really possessed an ounce of daring, they could have taken advantage of the feelings of the people that day, that night, and the following one, and turned the situation to their own advantage. Anything could have been done by a few men of courage. It would have been possible to declare a dictatorship. It would have been possible to proclaim a republic. Another King could have been hoisted on the throne. Any change could have been wrought during those hours. There was nobody with courage enough to take advantage of the conditions. The machine guns bristled. The people had been cowed. Everybody was afraid of everybody else. And everybody



was angry and upset and embittered because a son had not been allowed to come to his father's funeral.

Every one accused Marie. She had done it. She had agreed to it. She was afraid of Carol.

Why was the royal household afraid of Carol and the Carolists unless there was danger from that source? The dissolute manner of living in the palace, Carol's affairs, and the political affairs, were brought up again and discussed in their most minute details with a freedom I had never heard before. The people breathed a little more easily. King Ferdinand's death marked, at last, the end of Marie's power, "the old. . . ."

The theatres were packed. After the theatre, the people trooped into the cabarets. Tables and chairs were at a premium. The prices rocketed sky high. There were more machine guns on the street corners. Military patrols were doubled.

The day after the funeral, Queen Marie announced that she would go into seclusion, and watch for a while the remains of her beloved husband. And there were photographs already, of the Queen in seclusion with the King somewhere in the distance. A few days later some more photographs appeared of the Queen who had retired to a lonely nunnery with her daughter Ileana, to mourn her beloved husband; photographs in all poses, in all attitudes—in every shade of sorrow and sadness and



humility. The acting was not so bad, though it was a little old-fashioned. The whole affair however, was an insult to human intelligence.

Seldom if ever has the illness of a man been so speculated upon by his wife and by those surrounding him. At best, the history of any royal house makes unpleasant reading. The world is lucky that Kings and Queens have never been examples for their subjects. But to have speculated on the sympathy aroused in foreigners by a traveling Queen whose husband dies while she is away from his bedside, was a unique Machiavellian invention.

That a group of statesmen should prolong the life of a man, suffering the agonies of death, to deflect that sympathy from the Queen is an even more cold-blooded Machiavellianism. To keep the information of the death of the King from the world at large until proper arrangements had been made to safeguard the power of a few men and women, and to make that funeral the occasion to implant, indirectly, a little more bitterness in the hearts of the people against the heir to the throne, was a barbarous invention. A suffering body was kept palpitating so that it could be considered technically alive. A dead and decomposing body was being trafficked upon, bundled and huckstered this way and that, for gain, for profit, for political ambition, and for the satisfaction of the basest of human in-





stincts. They were all, the government and the royal household, ghouls.

Over this dead body alliances were made and closed. Shtirbey reaffirmed his allegiance and devotion. Bratianu reinforced his promise to keep the Hohenzollerns on the throne as long as they behaved. It was over this dead body that the dowager Queen Marie and the new Queen Mother became friends again.

It was to the interest of both to prevent Carol's return. The Princess heiress had become a Queen mother without ever having been Queen. She was told that she must protect her son against her husband. She had to protect the throne of her son against the desires of her husband. To do that she had to agree with Marie in everything. Carol's mother knew. It was imperative that the two unite. They had common interests.

Should Helen be good and submissive there would be as many pictures of her in the papers as of King Michael. She would be made popular. She would be made famous. Any sober-minded man would think that no Queen or princess would succumb to such lure; that people belonging to the royal houses had enough adulation and enough flattery not to want more. However, kings, queens and emperors have taken great advantage of the camera since it was invented. They are now taking



equal advantage of the talking pictures. They believe that popularity depends on the number of times their faces and figures appear in print and on the screen. They are competing for favor with actors, actresses, singers, and other famous men and women. This striving for photograph popularity is even more intense in the Roumanian royal household; due to the exhibitionism of the Dowager Queen.

They have to compete with her. Marie understands the power of publicity so well that she is photographed only with those of her children whom she favors and likes. There are a hundred times as many pictures of Marie and Princess Ileana as there are of Marie and any of her other children.

"Be good and mother will take a picture with you."

"I will never again be photographed with you."

The camera clicks at all hours of the day and night in the royal palace, and in those secluded retreats which the Queen has made famous. The American news reel companies keep a talkie truck on the grounds of the palace.

Carol took advantage of his father's funeral to let the world know that he was no longer so reluctant to occupy the throne as he had been until then. His friends organized special religious services for him in the Greek Orthodox Church of Paris. The



former heir to the throne appeared in full military uniform, his medals on his breast, and insignia of his command. A special Te Deum was ordered for the soul of his father.

At the end of the services, at the door of the church, in plain view of the multitude, his partisans bowed and kneeled before him and called him, at the top of their voices. "Your Majesty."

It mattered little that the Roumanian Parliament had decreed otherwise—it mattered little that Michael had already been declared King and that the oath of allegiance had been given to Michael by the statesmen and the officials of the army.

The Carolists, who had not enough courage to seize the reins of power and fight their way to the palace, exhibited enough courage to set up a parallel government in Paris.

Carol's entourage addressed him already as "Your Majesty." He was King. The coronation was anticipated.

"Ferdinand's death did one good thing," one of Carol's partisans explained to me in Paris. "It clarified the situation. We know definitely now that Helen is on the side of Marie. That makes one more enemy. Jonel Bratianu is not an old man, but we have talked to physicians who have had him under their care for a long time. Those physicians have informed us that his laziness is only an out-



ward symptom—that there are physical causes behind that laziness. He won't live much longer. Upon his death, his brother, Vintila Bratianu, will take over the Liberal Party and make himself premier. But Vintila is a weak man and a fool. Six months—a year, after Vintila makes himself Premier, the Peasant Party will wrench the power from him. Vintila is neither as ruthless nor as intelligent as his brother. With the Peasant Party in power, our road will be smoothed.”

The prophecy was perfect in every detail.

Carol is on the throne.

Six months later Bratianu was dead from an inflammation of the throat. A physician had been called to operate upon him. He died a few days later of septic poisoning. A physician had forgotten to sterilize something or other. In Roumania I was told that that septic poisoning was not an accident.

Vintila came into power. He was not as ruthless as his brother. Neither was he as intelligent. The Peasant Party gained more and more adherents. Maniu displaced Jorga in order better to camouflage the ultimate aim of the party. He sent up several trial balloons to find out the temper of the people.

The present prime minister, Mironescu, was accused of having attempted to smuggle Carol into



the country, and was acquitted though he never denied the accusation. There were several attempts at revolution by the Transylvanian peasants. Their onward march was stayed at the gates of Bucharest. Then one day the regents called Mr. Vintila Bratianu and told him that it would be better for all concerned if he retired immediately and resigned together with his cabinet.

He was dismissed like a little office boy. The Peasant Party, with Maniu at the head, formed a new cabinet. The first step of Carol's return was taken. The rest was inevitable. The general principles had been accepted. The details were being worked out. The number of Carolists grew. The Queen continued her good fight. Her publicity department worked hard. The country, the whole world was flooded with stories and pictures of herself and little Michael. There were stories about the poor young, neglected Queen Mother, and reams of indignation at Carol's behavior. Marie fought bravely and recklessly a losing battle.



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## CHAPTER NINE

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SOME three years ago, while in Paris, one of the attachés of the Roumanian Embassy came to see me. The gentleman had received a letter from Queen Marie in which she introduced a particular friend of hers, a young lady of considerable dramatic talent, and asked him to do his utmost to place her with one of the important moving picture companies. As this gentleman was a traveling attaché and visited the United States frequently he took it for granted that the Queen's letter indicated an American moving picture concern.

When he told me the name of the young lady I remembered having heard it mentioned frequently in Roumania. I remembered seeing her name on theatrical programs of Bucharest and remembered that she had created a rôle in an important French play, which had not been very successful.

"How does she look?" I asked my visitor.

"Splendid. Marvelous," he replied with great enthusiasm. "I have just seen her. She really is a very striking figure. You ought to do something for her. The Queen would be very grateful to you



if you did something for this young lady. She is very anxious to meet you."

Over the telephone, the young lady agreed to meet me the following day for tea at the Ritz.

At the appointed hour there appeared an unusually tall, beautiful young woman, dark-skinned, with coal black hair and a winning smile. Her eyes had a quality I had seldom seen in white women. They were hard and yet eloquent; penetrating and yet inscrutable.

We spent an agreeable afternoon talking of various things. As the day wore to a close, the attaché asked to be excused, for he had business to attend to. We were left alone.

"D—— has told me," I said, "that you are a friend of Queen Marie's. What exactly does that mean?" I questioned.

The young lady gathered her furs about her, as if a chill had suddenly passed through her frame, smiled bitterly from the side of her mouth, and said,

"Friend? Who can be a friend of hers? After she has used you, she disposes of you like that." She snapped her fingers in the air.

She refused to say another word on the subject and began to talk of something else.

"Do you ever see Carol?" I asked, anxious to know with whom I was dealing.

She turned her eyes on me and said: "Why should you ask such a question?"



I realized that I had trodden on forbidden ground. Thinking that I knew more about the subject than I really did, she said,

"It is useless to tell you anything because you will misunderstand. Everybody else does. It is a complicated enough story the Lord knows, even for people who want to understand."

We walked down the boulevard. Suddenly she said that she would like to have a cocktail. Would I take her somewhere for one?

"You must know where they serve good ones. Americans like cocktails."

I looked at the young lady across the table. That piratical look in her eyes struck me as something extraordinary. There was undoubtedly a good deal of gypsy blood in her veins. The quality of her hair, and her skin, and that stare in her eyes betrayed that. With that easy familiarity people assume far from their own homeland, I said,

"My dear, tell me, how much gypsy is there in you?"

"Quite a lot," she answered.

We talked for a few moments about her prospects in the movies. I was not very encouraging, explained how difficult it would be to land a contract unless she were in New York or in Hollywood, where directors and producers could see her.

"I can manage to go if I want to. I don't think she will have any reason to oppose it now."





"She?" I questioned again.

"Yes, I mean my mother." My friend caught herself.

But I knew that she did not mean her mother.

"When did you last play in Bucharest?" I asked.

"Oh," she answered, "that was a long time ago. I don't ever intend to play there again. After creating a rôle, like the rôle I created in the Atlantide, it is difficult to take on minor rôles. And the Bucharest National Theatre won't have any young blood."

The cocktail was warming her up. She was becoming more loquacious.

"I was promised backing in another play, but she does not always keep her promises."

Seeing herself betrayed by her own tongue, she added, "'She' means Marie. Now you have it clear. You are more inquisitive than an examining magistrate. Marie had promised backing. But she thinks she does not need me any more. Who knows!"

I pleaded ignorance and told her I did not know what the relation between the Queen and herself was and did not understand why the Queen should want to back her in any theatrical enterprise.

"I did not know Marie was in the theatrical business."

She looked at me searchingly and again began to talk of other things.



We left the café and walked slowly down the boulevard towards her home.

She lived in a small two room apartment.

A few moments after we had arrived, a maid brought in two charming little girls, both of them blonde and looking so unlike their mother that I repeated again and again,

"Are they really your children?"

She seemed very fond of them. She pressed them repeatedly to her bosom and inquired what they had been doing while Mama was away.

The blonde little heads looked very familiar to me; as if I had already seen them somewhere else.

When they were gone, the mother turned savagely on me and said:

"Why don't you ask me who is their father? Yes, why don't you ask me that? Hasn't D—— told you?"

"D—— has told me nothing," I replied.

"It has all been legalized," she said. "I have been married. There is a husband somewhere. I don't ever see him. He has never supported me. He has never paid any attention to me. I have a friend, Prince D——. He is old and mean and avaricious and won't do anything for me. It is just my lot to be cast aside after I have done my work."

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Several days later a hastily written note asked me to come to her rooms to see her.

She had discovered that I had written a gypsy play. Though the book was in English, a language which she did not know, she had had it read to her in French by the American wife of the dramatic editor of one of the newspapers, and had decided immediately that it was the very play she wanted. She was no longer interested in America or in the movies. She would find a theatre, a manager, a backer. The American lady and her husband would make an acting version of the play. It was all settled then and there.

It looked as though I would have nothing to say.

I tried to explain to the young lady that there were certain arrangements to be made between the author and the other parties, but she waved all that aside.

"Of course, of course, it is of no importance. We will arrange that. Meanwhile let me arrange everything else. When everything will be lined up I will call upon you. We will sign contracts then. Contracts! As if such things were needed between friends."

A week later, she came to see me. She was accompanied by the American lady, who had already finished her translation. It was a workmanlike job and when I had expressed my satisfaction, the pro-



tegée of Marie pushed several papers under my hand and asked me to sign them.

I read the documents and discovered that I was selling not only the French rights to that play, but the world rights, moving picture rights and that I was giving to the young actress the exclusive right to act in everything I had written or that I might write.

I pushed the document aside and said: "I won't sign this."

Without hesitation or apologies, she brought forth another document with terms much milder than the first, and not as all-inclusive.

"Will you sign this?" she asked.

It was still unsatisfactory and I told her so.

"It is the least I will take. Think of the work I have to do. I must get something in return for what I am giving. I am through with doing things for nothing." She proceeded to make a scene there and then.

I objected to her attitude and told her that I had not asked her to do anything.

The dark beauty pounded the table with her fist.

"Here I discover a play, it is as if written for me. I find somebody to translate it and somebody to back me and produce it. And he says he hasn't asked me to do anything. Shall I get no return for all my pain and my labors?"



Her energetic outburst embarrassed me. It was difficult to withstand her lure and as difficult not to sign my name on the dotted line. Yet I resisted. I told her that I would not sign anything that gave her more rights than she was entitled to.

She made as if to leave the room in anger, but returned from the door and produced a third document which, though it still contained too much, was more reasonable than either of the other two.

The whole transaction struck me as one between horse dealers.

"Listen here," I said, "I won't sign this either, but it is a more reasonable document than the other two. Will you please tell me whether your people were ever horse dealers?"

The American lady took offense at my remark, but the actress laughed good-naturedly, threw her arms about me, hugged me and said,

"All right. You prepare anything you wish and I will sign it."

A few days later, I received her photograph and a letter from somewhere in Switzerland whither she had gone with her children to rest.

When I saw her again she looked ravaged. She did not have enough money to pay her room rent. She told me that she had been marooned in a big hotel in Switzerland, that her maid and her children were still there, that they were unable to get out of the hotel because she could not pay the bill.



"I have telegraphed to Bucharest again and again. There was no reply. Forgotten. Thrown aside. As if I had never existed."

And suddenly she began to scream, "I have thrown my youth away."

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Nothing came of the proposed production of that play. She never got the backing.

Had the young lady not told her story, or parts of it, in recent interviews, I should never have written what is to follow. But she has thrown the half veil that covered the mystery aside.

She was a young dramatic student at the Conservatory of Bucharest when she attracted Prince Carol's attention. It was during the interim between the Zizi Lambrino affair and his marriage to Princess Helen. Carol's friends and enemies alike were anxious to have him forget Zizi and encouraged his attentions in other directions. The affair between the young dramatic student and the Prince was not discouraged. The Queen became her friend.

Carol's women friends have always remained devoted to him and were always loath to accuse him when the affairs were discontinued. Evidently the interested parties appealed to the young dramatic student's patriotism. It was her duty to enmesh and hold the prince and make him forget hismorganatic wife. She wound up by falling in love with



him. She was promised that she would be featured as a great star in the National Theatre. Gifts were showered upon her. The Queen took her under her wing when Carol became engaged to Princess Helen of Greece.

The two young people continued to see one another. When Carol was married to Helen and had gone with her on a honeymoon, the actress too left the country and was never far behind the honeymooners.

"In London I had an apartment not far from the hotel where Carol and his wife were staying at that time. He used to come and see me frequently. I knew that his marriage to Helen had only been a 'mariage de convenance.' He loved me. I was very happy with him. But then Marie interfered. I left London and came to Paris."

She married a young Roumanian army officer, but evidently the husband took it for granted that his marriage to her was only a matter of form; that he merely gave his name to the woman who had been the prince heir's friend.

Beautiful, striking, though penniless, the young woman continued to live in Paris. She received occasional gifts of money from Bucharest. The Queen kept her in good humor by writing to her and seeing her whenever she passed through the French capital.



The actress was still too young and too inexperienced to realize that she was being used by the astute matchmaker of Europe for her own purposes, and that she would be thrown aside when her usefulness was ended.

Then an elderly gentleman, of Roumanian princely blood, appeared on the scene. The man's reputation for avariciousness was such that people smiled at the young woman's impracticality. Yet, she did manage to inveigle him into starring her. She had her hour of triumph. Her name was in electric lights. Her pictures were everywhere. She was launched. She had not lived in vain.

Suddenly, the Lupescu affair loomed on the horizon. The dark beauty was called back to Bucharest. The Queen became an even more devoted friend than before.

She was told to win Carol from the red-headed lady. She failed. Carol was in the throes of his first outburst of passion for Magda Lupescu. The dark young woman's efforts were compensated by an engagement at the National Opera House.

But the students, remembering her origin, raised such a rumpus the engagement was discontinued. She was shipped back to Paris, and promised that she would get backing for another play.

Money was not plentiful in Roumania. The Roumanian lei had fallen to almost nothing. The





French franc was high. The former sweetheart of the prince heir lived in poverty and misery. She employed expedient after expedient to maintain herself. It seemed as if she were destined to perish there of cold and hunger, when Carol made his famous dash for Paris, after renouncing his right to the throne.

"And again I was appealed to to pull him away from Magda Lupescu. I waited until after the first flush of the affair. I managed to meet him when he was alone. He was very nice and kind. He always is. But it was a difficult task. The Queen urged me on. My own ambition was aroused. I am younger and more beautiful than Magda Lupescu. I know it. He has loved me. I am sure of that. But it was a difficult task. I would have preferred a dozen failures in the theatre to that failure. I could not hold him again. Magda Lupescu was stronger than I. I failed. I failed."

And then the Queen tried to palm her off elsewhere. She hoped America might be made to take care of her. The talkies crimped that plan.

When I last saw her in Paris, the turbulent gypsy-looking young lady was in the good graces of some one. She wore beautiful clothes. She travelled in an expensive car. She dined at the best restaurants.

Her children, the two blonde little girls, were in Switzerland. The hotel bill was being paid weekly.



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## CHAPTER TEN

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DEEPLY wounded because she had not been included in the regency that was formed while King Ferdinand was still alive, Queen Marie began to lay her plans to force her way into that body which had been constituted to rule Roumania after the King's death, and until little Michael's majority.

Unable to say anything derogatory about the two older members of the regency—chief of the Greek Orthodox Church and chief of the Supreme Court, Marie very carefully and gingerly, as is her wont, let it be known that Prince Nicholas, the third regent, never did anything without her consent; that he was too frivolous to burden himself with such obligations unless she promised to relieve him of the responsibility.

Meanwhile, Helen, the Queen Mother, was beginning to feel a little more like herself. The years she had spent in the palace beside these extremely wilful women—Queen Marie and her daughters—had been very disheartening. These years had



taken the starch out of her. Had Carol shown any love or consideration for her, or had he at any time taken her part in the petty quarrels and jealousies that arose between the women, she would not have suffered so many humiliations. Quite naturally, though so much antagonized by his mother and by his sisters, Carol took their side against his wife whenever an occasion arose.

The family reasoned that after all Helen was a rank outsider. The political reasons for which Carol had been made to marry her no longer existed. She was politically of no importance whatsoever. She was colorless and without any temperament. It was too bad that she still hung about the stage. She had no rôle in the new play.

But when an act of Parliament made her little son the future King, and she had been elevated above the rank of the other women in the royal household, Helen began to show that she had a will of her own. Queen Marie, who had never given her a thought, realized that she would have to reckon with her in any of her future battles. Until then Marie had acted as if Michael was her own youngest son—by proxy. Indeed, it was said that the men who married Marie's daughters never had wives, they were married to the Queen's daughters and were her husbands by proxy.

Marie suddenly saw a new enemy looming upon



the horizon; saw that in the event of her own husband's death, Helen, the moth of the young King, might play a more important rôle than she would herself. There was already a new clique in the palace—Helen's clique. Courtiers and politicians who hadn't given Helen a thought till then began to want to be seen by her. That was always the way intrigues began.

Forthwith gossips began to spread the rumor that little Michael was not a normal child—that he was deaf and dumb and that his mentality was below normal even at that early age.

The gossip crossed the borders of the country and gained more and more credence.

"Isn't it a pity!"

"Too bad."

"Poor Helen has no luck."

"It's the Hohenzollern blood."

"No—Helen's own family . . . you know. . . ."

In Paris, Carol, who seemed at that time completely detached from anything that concerned Roumania, realized what these rumors meant and went to a great deal of trouble to deny them. He assured the press and the world that the rumors were lies; that his son Michael was more than a normal child and was neither deaf nor dumb.

Yet the rumors persisted and became precise.

And then Queen Mother Helen, in despair, see-



ing what was being done to prevent her son from ever walking up the steps to the throne, devised a plan to prove to the world that her son was neither deaf nor dumb nor half-witted.

She organized a grand reception in her private rooms while Queen Marie was away on one of her frequent jaunts to the Black Sea. People from all walks of life, and local and foreign newspaper men were invited to that reception.

After tea had been served, little Michael appeared in the reception room and greeted all the guests loudly and shook hands all around.

"How do you do? Comment ça va? How do you do?"

Much to the surprise of most of the guests, the child chattered with them, as children will, and answered quickly and intelligently all the questions put to him. The more skeptical guests questioned the child quite closely. He answered cleverly. He was only five, but he already knew the alphabet and the figures.

When his governess had led the little prince out of the room, his mother wept and said to the guests,

"And here, my friends, you have seen the deaf mute and the half-idiot."

Queen Marie was furious when she heard what had occurred. She came to the conclusion that Helen had the possibilities of either a dangerous



enemy or a powerful ally. Helen became both. When it was convenient she allied herself with Marie, otherwise there was no love lost between the two. Helen wanted her son to be King.

The conditions of the country were disastrous. Economically, it was on the brink of ruin. Railroad employees, the army, and all other government employees had not been paid for months. The universities were no longer functioning as schools of learning. They were the hotbeds of sedition and the centers from which every disturbance emanated. There were several pogroms against Jews. The anti-Semitic faction had become so strong that no judge dared to condemn those who had been found guilty—nay, those who prided themselves on being guilty of murder, when the victims were Jews. Students carried these murderers out on their shoulders from the tribunals and proclaimed them as national heroes.

In addition to that, the political unrest grew. Prince Shtirbey's name began to be openly mentioned. His deeds were spoken of frankly. While the Peasant Party organized itself the opposition papers unveiled more and more of the rascality and thievery of the Bratianus. Queen Marie's name was being linked with their shady affairs. A party of young men, statesmen in incubus, organized secretly with the avowed aim of bringing Carol



back to the throne. The number of Carolists grew. They were in every branch of the government, including the Foreign Office.

Neglecting her other troubles, Queen Marie centered all her energy on preventing her son's return. He had to be kept away from Roumania at all costs. Her long arm reached him very soon. He had been living quietly in Paris. Under ordinary circumstances, his amorous misdeeds would soon have been forgotten by the Roumanians and by the rest of the world. But Marie did not want the world to forget that he was unfit to be a king; that he was a Lothario.

And so one day, Madame Lambrino came to Paris to call Prince Carol of Hohenzollern before the Tribunal of the Seine.

"I, Jeanne Marie Valentine Lambrino, wife of Carol of Hohenzollern, living at Neuilly-sur-Seine, 6 rue Borghese, declare that I was married to Carol of Hohenzollern, the then Prince heir of Roumania, on the 31st of August, 1918, before the priest of the Orthodox Church of Odessa, who also fulfilled the functions of a civil officer.

"A male child called Mircea was born to us on the 8th of January, 1920. This marriage was annulled for dynastic reasons without either the wife or the husband having been consulted. To compensate me for the damages I have suffered, the family



of my husband agreed to pay me an income of one hundred and ten thousand francs a year, supposedly the income of the capital deposited for me at the Banque Générale de Roumanie. I, Jeanne Marie Valentine Lambrino, Madame de Hohenzollern, resigned myself to that situation in the interest of the Roumanian dynasty and also resigned myself to the fact that my husband was married a second time to assure the heredity of the throne.

"This second marriage, I was told, was contracted purely as a matter of form, a statement which I can prove by letters from Carol of Hohenzollern, and by letters from people in Roumania whose authority has never been questioned and is incontestable.

"I have allowed this humiliating condition to be imposed upon me because I was told that such an action would demonstrate my patriotism, and was in the interest of the country.

"But on the 4th of January, 1926, Carol of Hohenzollern definitely announced his renunciation of the throne. This renunciation was also an official renunciation of his marriage to Princess Helen of Greece.

"However, instead of coming back to Neuilly, to live with me and with our son, Carol of Hohenzollern, exiled from Roumania where he has lost all his rights and prerogatives has come to live in Paris. Taking into consideration that the special situation





that had mitigated against the marriage between myself and Carol of Hohenzollern had disappeared when he renounced the throne of Roumania, I demand that he be forced to compensate me for the damages which he has caused me and that he should be made to assure an income, in the measure of his means, for his wife and his child. Such damages are not less than ten million francs."

Prince Carol was asked to appear before the Tribunal of the Seine to answer why he should not be condemned to pay the damages which Madame Lambrino asked.

Had Carol still been officially heir to the throne, Madame Lambrino could not have sued him in France, but he had publicly and officially renounced his right to the throne; he was therefore only a private resident of Paris and as such he was amenable to French law.

The newspapers of the whole world were immediately informed of what happened. Very few realized the intrigue behind this action, realized that they were dancing to the tune of the most astute political bagpiper of Europe.

It must be remembered that until then, Mme. Lambrino had been refused passports whenever she wanted to leave her country, and had been kept virtually a prisoner in Roumania. But suddenly she was let loose. Four days after she had arrived in



Paris she had instituted suit against her former husband, pretending of course that it was all done in order to legalize the name of her son Mircea whom she wanted to place in a school in Paris.

"Under what name shall I place this poor child in school?" she cried to reporters. "He is not illegitimate. He has a right to his father's name. There are no laws authorizing morganatic marriages of princes in Roumania. I am, or I was, his legal wife, and the child's legality has to be cleared."

The ten million francs Madame Lambrino asked as damages was a specific reminder to Carol that unless he behaved in Paris, unless he discouraged the young men who had formed a party to hoist him back to power, his personal fortune would not remain intact. And about money matters Carol seems to have inherited a knowledge from his parents that would put him on a par with the money kings anywhere.

Carol answered Madame Lambrino's action with the reminder to his mother and her friends that if he had to appear in court to defend himself, the affairs of certain oil wells for which concessions had been given to certain English firms and the exact rôle played by England in this affair would have to come to the fore. Suddenly the Parisian papers began to talk about these oil wells. What had happened at the transactions about those wells?



No one knows what financial scandals would have been unsealed had the trial of Madame Lambrino been pressed more vigorously against the former heir of Roumania! He had made up his mind to draw the veil aside from many questionable dealings which had until then remained mysteries. He would not have stopped at anything. Queen Marie knew him well enough not to dare him. She beat a hasty retreat.

A few months later the Lambrino case was fought half-heartedly before the French judges. Carol's wife was refused recognition. All damages were denied her. The legality of her son's name was not established. As a matter of fact, because of his illegitimacy the boy was denied permission to enter the Lycée Michelet, where only legitimate sons of good bourgeois are permitted on the seats of learning.

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After the death of his father, angered by the fact that he had not been permitted to come to the funeral, Carol began to lend a more willing ear to those who advised him that the conditions were becoming ripe for his return to the throne.

Instead of continuing to insist that he had renounced the throne of Roumania forever, Carol now began to tell newspapermen that he would return if the people called him. In an off-guard mo-



ment, he even said to the reporter of a French newspaper that party leaders had come to see him and asked him to reconsider the advisability of his return. Possibly he spoke off-guard, and it is also possible that he sent his words out as a trial balloon; to see what effect they would have. He may be a gay Lothario, but Carol of Hohenzollern is nobody's fool; not even his mother's. He continued to tea and dine secretly with those party leaders.

One of the party leaders, Manoilescu, was arrested at the border line at the end of October, 1927. This arrest brewed a loud storm in Roumania, and the dynastic problem, which seemed to have been buried if not solved forever, arose to be one of the most important questions of the day. This Mr. Manoilescu, still young, one of Carol's old friends, had been under-Secretary of State in the financial department of General Averescu, one of Carol's occasional supporters. Averescu has penned some of the bitterest words ever said about a soldier, yet on other occasions he had come to Carol's rescue and protected his rights.

Upon Manoilescu's arrest, Madame Lupescu was immediately suspected of having betrayed her lover; for it seemed to many that she was the only one who knew that Manoilescu was the bearer of letters, from Carol to people of political influence in the country. But this suspicion against Madame Lupescu



was soon allayed, for among the letters was also one from Madame Lupescu to her parents, in which she asked them to obey Manoilescu implicitly in everything he asked of them, and to act and speak only according to his instructions.

The anti-Semites, of course, seized this as an occasion to spread a little more hatred against the Jews. The Bratianus pointed out that Carol intended to return with the help of the Jews and to rule the country with them, through them and for them. Jewish heads, Jewish windows and Jewish pockets paid the first costs of this Carolistic blunder.

Mr. Manoilescu was brought to court. The Bratianus sought to prove that he had intended to commit a crime against the dynasty and against the security of the state. The punishment for such crimes was death. The firing squad was ready.

Meanwhile, in Paris, Carol let it be known that he had definitely parted from Madame Lupescu, that life in common between them had become impossible—that the former prince heir realized that he had not acted in the best interests of the country when he had gone away with her, and that he intended to mend his ways. The world was treated to the spectacle of Carol as a repentant sinner. When Manoilescu was caught, Carol resumed his life with the red-headed lady, ready to don the penitent's garb when necessary, not before.



While the trial of Manoilescu was being held in Bucharest, Carol's home was robbed. Documents he possessed to prove certain intrigues were taken from the drawers of his writing table. It was later on established that these burglaries were the work of a certain Mr. Radoi of the political secret service of Roumania. But that is another story. The mysterious Radoi, the phantom of Roumania's secret service, makes his appearance wherever needed.

At the same time, another burglary took place at the home of Mademoiselle Vera Peters, of the Opéra Comique. During her absence, some one broke open the secret drawers of her desk and took some letters and documents belonging to "an important Roumanian political personage."

Another intrigue was unmasked.

At the same time another mysterious affair happened.

One day a young Roumanian named Marinescu was asked by a stranger to meet him in the Bois du Boulogne near Paris. After a lengthy conversation on the political situation in Roumania, this stranger, a Frenchman, offered Marinescu a hundred thousand francs (\$4,000) if he would assassinate Prince Carol. When Mr. Marinescu refused, the stranger black-jacked him and would have killed him had not passersby interfered. The would be criminal succeeded in making good his escape and the French



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police never cleared up this mystery, any better than they have cleared up the two burglaries. The French political service is the most servile police in the world. Of necessity they are dumb and paralyzed.

While the Manoilescu trial was going on, the Bratianu newspapers gossiped that Carol had offered them several propositions; that he was ready to agree never to make any effort to recoup his lost throne if they paid him immediately a certain amount of money. In other words, Carol was trying to blackmail them. The opposition papers, however, the Carolists, wrote that they had Carol's personal assurance that he would never attempt to enter Roumania by force.

Carol answered that he had never intended to enter Roumania but when called by the people, yet he said some of the Bratianu emissaries had come to him and offered him considerable sums of money if he would promise never to listen again to those who tried to make him attempt to regain his throne. He had refused and had driven them out of his house.

My own conclusions are that the money offer was not tempting enough and that Carol's assurances were not serious enough. All this piffle about honor and fidelity was and is only sand in the eyes of fools. How any people could stand for all this nonsense is more than I can understand. Really,





people have such kings as they deserve. As far as Roumania is concerned. . . .

In Roumania, everybody had taken it for granted that the judges, minions of Britianu, would make an example of Manoilescu. The young man was being tried according to military rules, under martial law. Professor Jorga and General Averescu came to the defense of the accused.

Manoilescu defended himself well and pleaded with great fervor.

"My great crime is that I love my country too well, and love the father of a certain little blue-eyed boy. If the laws of my country demand that I pay with my life for this great love, I am ready."

The audience wept. The judges were afraid, if not impressed.

Manoilescu was acquitted and set free.

This acquittal sounded the twentieth doom of the Bratianu government and nullified in a measure most of the intrigues of Queen Marie. It also paved the way for Carol's eventual return; to serve as a regent until his son should reach his majority. Carol emphasized this point again and again. He would not snatch the throne from his son; no. He wanted only to be near the little King and advise him. The father craved to be near his son. He was a father, a poor exiled father, who longed to be near his son and to guide him in the right paths.



Shortly after the Manoilescu affair, Bratianu forbade the meeting of the Congress of peasants at Alba Julia, the town in Transylvania where King Ferdinand had been crowned in 1922 after Transylvania had become Roumanian territory. The peasants threatened with an open revolt. They had scythes and sickles, but the Bratianus had artillery—machine guns. So the peasants were advised to return home peacefully.

And then suddenly came an even more dramatic event.

Jonel Bratianu died mysteriously at the age of 63. He had been a powerfully built man and had preserved himself well. On the 21st of November, 1926, he complained of pains in the throat. The doctor examined the patient and declared he suffered of a cold of no consequence. But the following day, Bratianu's throat swelled so the patient had difficulty in breathing. A surgical operation was thought necessary and Professor Masta was called. Conscious of the importance of his actions, so people say, Professor Masta's hands trembled. The surgeon's knife fell out of his hands, and he cut his own finger. Professor Angelescu, who was present, the then minister of Public Instruction, being an experienced physician, replaced his colleague and continued the operation.

A few hours later another operation was neces-



sary. Pus formed continually. The swelling of the throat strangled and suffocated the patient. The infection could not be localized. It spread to the vocal cords. They were paralyzed. The physicians called to the bedside of the Premier were so hysterical and excited that Bratianu, who was suffering terrible agonies, scribbled upon a piece of paper:

"Don't be so hysterical. Do your work calmly."

Towards the evening of the same day another operation was found to be absolutely necessary. On Wednesday, the 23d of November, Jonel Bratianu was breathing artificially. Before seven o'clock that evening he was dead.

The death of Jonel Bratianu threw the country into paroxysms of fear and despair. Those who had been present at the operation performed by Professor Angelescu wondered why the hands of Professor Masta, one of the most famous surgeons, had trembled. Did they tremble because of the political importance of his patient, or did they tremble because he refused to carry out an order at the last moment? Whose order? Such minor operations were performed daily by the average country physician. Why had Masta, the great surgeon, failed?

Those who had been at the bedside of the premier affirmed that Professor Angelescu, a celebrated surgeon also, but who had not practiced medicine for a number of years since he had devoted himself to



active politics, had neglected to take any antiseptic precautions while he performed the operation upon Jonel Bratianu; that he had not even washed his hands with disinfectants.

Was it carelessness? And if it was deliberately done, who had instigated the crime?

"That Bratianu was murdered, there is no doubt. If we could but find out which party murdered him we would at least know how to orient ourselves," a Roumanian politician said to me a day after Bratianu's death. There was no question of punishing the murderer. That simple thing was known to be beyond the power of any one, no matter which party was responsible for it.

Had the Carolists done it, or had the palace become impatient with Bratianu who was continually threatening to throw out the Hohenzollerns of Roumania? Many people had expected him to declare Roumania a republic with himself as Premier for life. He had the power to do it. No one would have opposed him. The whole country was sick and tired of the dissolute crew in the royal house. What had prevented Bratianu from carrying out these plans was a sentimental attachment to the memory of the work of his father.

It should be remembered that it was Jon Bratianu, father of Jonel, who had brought Carol the First to Roumania. Jonel Bratianu was loath to have



people say that what the father had done the son had undone. It should be remembered that Jon Bratianu had been canonized as a sort of Roumanian saint and had been made to appear as the father of his country; the Washington of Roumania.

The Queen and all the royal palace had for a long time banked on this sentimentality of the ruthless Jonel. They had not taken his threats very seriously to begin with, but as he repeated them oftener, and oftener, they must have come to the conclusion that the day was not far off when the Prime minister would permit his mind to talk louder than his heart. They had tried his patience too frequently. They must have heard the reverberating echo of his words from the walls of the Palace:

"Madame, another word and I shall rid the country of your family forever."

Roumanian politicians and Roumanian newspapermen refused to believe that Bratianu's death was an accident. They refused to believe that Masta's hands trembled and refused to believe that Angelescu had forgotten to wash his hands.

They did not believe in miracles. The death of Jonel Bratianu served certain parties too well not to arouse suspicion. Now the parties directly involved in this affair are all dead. The mystery is sealed in their graves.

As a matter of form the opposition parties and



the Peasant Party allowed Vintila Bratianu to take over the government and form a new cabinet with the same men who had served under his brother. Everybody knew Vintila Bratianu could not hold the power for any length of time. The opposition merely permitted this weak government to form itself in order not to give too great credence to the belief that had spread amongst the people that they had killed Bratianu in order to come into power.

And now people definitely began to direct their eyes towards Paris. Carol's return became a matter of days and weeks. No one doubted that it would happen. Something had to be done. Carol or a republic.

\* \* \* \* \*

Conditions in Roumania were more serious than they had been heretofore. They were bad enough under Jonel Bratianu. They became worse under his vacillating brother.

And suddenly the cry arose:

"We must obtain a loan from America."

Some spoke of a hundred million dollars and others said that two hundred and three hundred was the sum needed to put the affairs of the country in order. Millions. Hundreds of millions were needed. America had all the gold in the world. Everybody was borrowing money from America.



Why not Roumania? It was a rich country. It had no cash but it had wealth, unexploited riches.

Railroad communication had become almost impossible. The locomotives the Roumanians had taken from the Hungarians after the war and those which they had bought from France, were mostly out of commission, and were cluttering up the repair shops.

It must be said here again that for unexplainable reasons, the cash in circulation in Greater Roumania, a country of eighteen million inhabitants, was the same amount it had been when the country had been one of only six million inhabitants. A good deal of that cash had become paralyzed in a few hands, due to the speculations of the Bratianu banking houses. Only they had money. It was lent on interest at thirty, forty and fifty per cent.

The cry was out that Roumania needed money for the stabilization of its currency, which fluctuated daily from ten to fifty per cent of its value, and robbed the merchants of their confidence.

The newspapers took up the cry. That proposed loan began to appear not as a banking transaction, but as a veritable Messiah that would save the country from all ills. America held the horn of plenty in its hands.

Peasants, working men, merchants, politicians, statesmen and even children in the schools were



made to believe that the foreign loan would save the country. The Vintila Bratianu government argued that unless Roumania presented a united front to the world, and gave the impression that it had a stable government and had settled down or intended to settle down to real work from then on, they could obtain no loan anywhere.

That statement was a grand coup. It did more to quiet the opposition than any other statement had ever done.

"If necessary, and until we get the money from America."

The Peasant Party continued its opposition but in a mild and civilized form. The order was given that all pogroms and persecutions of the Jews must cease. It was pointed out that the Jews had tremendous financial power in America and that they would undoubtedly oppose any loan to a country in which their brethren were being persecuted and slaughtered.

To salve the wound, a few Jews were elected to Parliament at the new elections. One of the leaders of the Jews, indeed, the leader, joined the Liberal Party, which had until then been known as the anti-Semitic Party. Thus the Liberal Party was consecrated as the party favorable to the Jews. An influential and well known Roumanian Jewish newspaperman was sent to New York to pacify





and to give assurances to the Jews of America.

Conversations were started by the secretary of finance with several important banking houses in France and in Germany. A consortium of bankers agreed to raise the loan, provided Roumania agreed to put its house in order. There was plenty of money loose in the world. It could be gathered. The interest to be paid depended upon the stability of the country that wanted to borrow it.

"Put your house in order."

It was intimated that the Queen must be made to understand that she must behave; and that the Carol affair had to be allowed to dissipate itself. The Roumanians were told that no people would buy the bonds of a country of which the government was unstable. They were told that they had to take it for granted that King Michael would become the King upon reaching his majority, and that the regency would rule until then.

The Roumanian government promised.

Then the consortium of bankers, having consulted with legal lights, began to point out to the Roumanian government that certain laws had to be modified before foreign capital would consent to come into the country. The law about foreigners, for one, would have to be modified, and the mining laws would have to be changed so as to permit foreign capital to exploit the oil wells.



The Roumanian government promised.

"We will do as you say."

But the loan, which at first had seemed merely an affair of days, was not forthcoming, and the stormy petrels began to lose patience. The anti-Semitic press again reared its head and declared that the country was being Jewified; that the Jews were raising their noses a little too high.

"And we haven't got the money yet. How will they behave when we get it?"

Some said that it might have been more expedient to threaten to kill the Jews if money was not forthcoming soon.

A Roumanian commission was sent to Paris to confer with the bankers. But the affair dragged and dragged. The conditions imposed by the international bankers became more and more stringent. They demand greater and greater guarantees. They demanded the control of the finances of the country. They demanded to act as receivers until the loan was paid.

They wanted to know how much of the money would be spent for the improvement of the railroads; how much would have to be spent for the stabilization of the currency, and how much would be used to pay immediate internal debts.

The Roumanians wondered who informed the bankers and who advised them.



Roumania's financial experts had never been very precise in their accounts. The international bankers however had their own experts working in Roumania, and their figures varied greatly from those given them by the Roumanians.

The Roumanian papers carried daily bulletins about the progress of the affair; as they had carried daily bulletins in other days about the progress of the war, or of the illness of their King.

"The condition of the loan is improving," the wits said.

"The condition of the loan has taken a turn for the worse. The doctors assure us that there is no danger."

And then one banking group after another gave up the project. This continual bartering between the banks and the representatives of Roumania was one of the most curious banking deals in Europe. The guarantees demanded for the loan were harsh. There were other humiliating conditions, to say the least, that were demanded of the country. The Roumanians agreed. And still the transactions dragged along. The more the banking firms obtained the more they wanted. Finally they demanded that the revenue of the whole country be mortgaged to them and that France and England guarantee the loan.

The opposition papers desisted from any vicious attacks on their government, but as the affair



dragged on, they began to make the failure of the loan one of their weapons against the Liberals. The anti-Semites and the Queen and her entourage lost patience. The Queen had become interested in a new friend, and she shifted her "seclusion" from one place to another, leaving behind her a long trail of photographs in new poses. Princess Ileana too had gotten into some new scrape which displeased everybody. The bankers felt they could not sell bonds of a country that had made itself so ridiculous that no one believed it really existed outside of the press, the movies, the theatre and the vaudeville stage.

Finally, after a long time, and much worry and humiliation, the loan was obtained; a much smaller loan than had been anticipated with much more onerous conditions than was thought possible. Roumania agreed.

The Roumanian currency was stabilized at one-fortieth of its former value. A few locomotives were repaired. A few debts were paid. The Messiah had come, but he did not save anything. Conditions continued as before, and now those who had hoped for so much from the loan, began to ask one another:

"What has happened to the money?"

"When did it come?"

"Where did it come from?"



American Jewry would pour its gold into Roumania.

The disappointed rabble continued its old time activities and amusements. Jews were again thrown out of trains. Jewish women were again driven out of theatres and public places. Roumanians who had a more or less Oriental appearance were cruelly beaten and almost killed when they too were taken for Jews.

One of the Roumanian delegates to the parliamentary Congress at Washington said, in my presence, to a group of Jews:

"Worry not, gentlemen, when a few dozen windows are broken. We have a glass factory at Azuga. It needs business. When heads are broken I promise to interfere from now on. It is your duty not to make too much noise when glass shatters. Remember to save the heads. Don't worry about the glass. It is a cheap outlet for a spirited youth."

And then the Vintila government crashed, and the Maniu government came into power.



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## CHAPTER ELEVEN

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THE change was rather an unexpected one. Some even accused Shtirbey of new machinations, saying that it was he who had urged upon the regency that Vintila Bratianu had served his purpose. The Prime minister was called and asked to resign. He was dismissed with the same informality with which one dismisses an office boy. A close friend of his told me that for days on end, Vintila Bratianu walked around up and down in his room, biting his finger nails and moaning:

"They have dismissed me like an office boy. They have dismissed me like an office boy."

But he was gone. His political power was ended. Maniu and his people were in the saddle. The people who had not been permitted to hold a congress at Alba Julia were in power. Maniu gave the impression of a civilized man. New hope was instilled into the hearts of the people. Maniu declared, quite openly, that though the country and the treasury had been looted by the Liberals, he in-



tended to put the house in order. He and his associates were from Transylvania which had formerly been a Hungarian province. They had been educated in German schools.

But these Transylvanians who had agitated so much in favor of Roumania when they lived under the Hungarians, who had yearned so fervently to belong again to the mother country, began, upon their assumption of power, to treat Roumania like conquered territory. In other words, they treated the old kingdom in much the same manner as the Roumanians had treated Transylvania after they had conquered it. They were new Roumanians. They hated the old ones.

The Transylvanians considered themselves superior to the other Roumanians. Their superiority bred contempt. They told the peasants that they were there in their interest. Yet there never had been greater robbery, greater misappropriation of funds than under the Maniu government. Bribery, trickery, graft were elevated to an institution. It was no longer winked at. It was demanded and accepted openly.

Meanwhile, Queen Marie had again awakened from a coma during which she had paid little attention to the affairs of the country. Her fresh enthusiasms, coming at an advanced age, left little energy for anything else. But here was the Maniu



government, and the danger of Carol's return was becoming greater each day. Maniu, Manoilescu, Mironescu, were woven together. Half of Maniu's collaborators were avowed or secret Carolists.

It was still forbidden to mention Carol's name in public or in the public prints. Yet this interdiction did not prevent the active propaganda that was going on in favor of the former heir to the throne. The old story about Carol's abdication was brought to the fore again. The old accusations were rehashed. The *Epoca* attacked the dowager more and more vigorously. Queen Marie retaliated in the only way she knew how—by a special campaign of publicity. It was her most frequently used weapon. The edge was a little dull from too much use, but it was still a good bludgeon.

This time the press campaign was one entirely in favor of Michael and "the poor neglected mother" of the little King. Pictures of the little boy appeared in the rotogravure sections of papers and magazines, in and out of season. In and out of places. The Queen knew the value of repetition. Close upon the praises for little Michael's prowesses and extraordinary intelligence, came loud praises for Queen Helen's faithfulness and exemplary conduct. No one could reproach her with anything. Not an affair of the heart; not a single enthusiasm. She lived solely for the little boy—her little son—





King, and gave him a thorough education. She was a saint. The Saint of Roumania. Heartless Carol!

Grandmother could not refrain from appearing with her beloved little grandson, from time to time, in the pictures; she could not resist going with him to functions of parliament and to social functions where a moving picture camera or a news-reel camera were on hand. He was such a lovely boy! Poor half orphan! And he had such a lovely mother. She was almost blind, true, but she was such an exemplary mother. She could not help her son rule the country but she was such a lovely mother. She was rather plain and placid, but she was such a devoted Christian!

\* \* \* \* \*

It was about this time that Prince Nicholas sobered up and realized the true condition of affairs.

No man wants to be known as a fool and a puppet. It was known that his own voice was absolutely nil in the regency; that when he was consulted it was merely as a matter of form, for it was known that his voice was but the echo of his mother's.

The regents, who had been the tools of Bratianu, became the tools of Maniu who was not inclined to run the country to suit the "Englishwoman." Then the Carolists approached Prince Nicholas and



attracted his attention to the injustices that had been committed at the address of his brother. Prince Nicholas had a great affection for his older brother but that affection had been stifled by Queen Marie, who refused to have any of her children think of anybody but her. To love someone else while she was around was a crime; not because she was thirsty for the love of her people or kin, but because she wanted to possess everything and everybody about her. She was and is a spiritual vampire.

Nicholas showed that he had an opinion of his own.

Marie came storming down upon Bucharest from one of her dozen secluded and well-photographed retreats. Nicholas opposed her. However, he was flattened out. Marie used every argument. There was no reticence or hesitation about her words. She was the head of the Hohenzollern house in Roumania and everybody had to know it. Particularly Nicholas.

Helen was a strong ally of hers now. They had the same interest; that of preventing Carol from ever returning to the country. Was Nicholas for or against her? No one had a will of his own when she was about.

"I am the King. I. I. I. You will do as I tell you."

Nicholas promised half-heartedly.



Shtirbey was still one of her allies, despite the fact that the power of the Bratianus was gone, and that others had displaced him in her affections.

He still had a strong grip upon the country through its financial affairs which were still in the hands of the Liberals. The ranks were still, more or less, at the beck and call of the Shtirbey and Bratianu families. The Liberals and Peasants seemed to have come to a secret understanding between themselves.

"We leave you the treasury of the government—you give us the business affairs of the country."

The rift between the Peasant Party—really between Maniu—and the Queen grew wider and wider. The only voice she had in the management of Roumania was that of Nicholas in the regency, and when that son of hers threatened to fail her, Queen Marie brought forth all the weapons at her command.

Strange rumors began to circulate about Nicholas. He could not speak to a woman without the news being broadcast. The press began to speak of "a certain young man of the royal household who had better behave and stay indoors when he is not sober."

It was not very specific, was it? Discreet, eh?

When this little warning had not acted as a deterrent to Prince Nicholas, these rumors were made



to cross the border and the press of the whole world was treated to the beginning of a new scandal. Nicholas intended to abduct a very young lady. . . .

When Princess Ileana, who had been Marie's steady companion throughout her travels, sided with her brother she was equally punished. The little scandals in her life were given to the world.

Nicholas walked in the right path for a while. The rotogravure sections published pictures of him with his little nephew.

These petty scandals and intrigues of the royal household continued while the affairs of the country sagged lower and lower. The unpaid police went into partnership with the burglars. Soldiers begged for food. The collector of taxes pocketed the receipts. People had to bribe teachers when they wanted their children to be promoted from one class to the other; bribe with bread, meat and eggs.

Small external loans, at high interest, were being contracted continually by the Maniu government, who indebted the country beyond its capacity of payment. Monopolies were being sold, concessions were being given, while new laws were being made to prevent these monopolies and these concessions from being valid. I shall speak elsewhere of the most unheard of law called "the preventive moratorium."

I have seen with my own eyes, soldiers without



shoes on their feet and in clothes so tattered that their bodies were exposed to the wind and the cold. They had neither weapons nor food nor clothes. They were starved and emaciated beyond belief. The Maniu government continued to "save" the country. The Queen continued to increase its reputation abroad.

It passes belief that the people could endure such poverty and such hardships for so long without revolting. It passes belief that the people could be put to sleep again and again by false sirens; waiting for a better day while they worked so hard for so little, and while the rulers worked so little for so much.

The land that had been given to the peasants, to stave off a possible revolution, after the war, had been parcelled out in such a way that no family could eke out the barest living from the product of the land. Cooperative association between the peasants had been forbidden by the Bratianu government, because cooperation threatened to become communism under certain circumstances. The peasants had to work their land without the advantages of modern machinery. Instead of wheatfields of thousands of acres, the fields were now hacked out into fields of ten, twenty or thirty acres. The wheat of Roumania, which had formerly ranked as the third best in the world, was lowered to a nonde-



script quality. Few merchants wanted to buy it except for internal consumption. It sold, when it sold, at a price little above the cost of seeding.

Roumania, which had exported thousands of tons of wheat before the war at the highest prices, could export nothing even at the lowest possible price. The industries of Transylvania had come to a standstill, due to the difficulties of obtaining credit, difficulties of distribution, and difficulties of exportation. Indeed, so many difficulties were put in the path of the industrialists that they preferred to see their mills closed. The banks of the Bratianus acquired more and more factories and mills. Property, land, lost all value. The peasants, unable to make a living out of the land, abandoned it and went to the cities. Those who still held on did so only because they hoped to be able to sell it back to the old boyars; from whom it had been taken when it was given to them. The law gave to the peasants the right to sell their land ten years after it was given to them.

The oil wells which had furnished a great deal of income to the government, and also employment to thousands of people, were more or less at a standstill. Not one-fourth of the capacity of the Roumanian oil wells has ever been extracted. Yet due to taxes and graft and speculation, oil and gasoline were expensive in Roumania—even more so than



in the United States, despite the fact that the wages in Roumania are not one-tenth of what they are in the United States.

Maniu and his associates were continually promising better days in the future, airing their grievances against the Bratianus, looting the country and its treasury. The Queen was fighting her own fights in the press of the world, bringing more and more ridicule upon her own head and opprobrium upon her children.

Princess Ileana became engaged to a German prince whose reputation was such that the Roumanian Parliament had to declare the engagement null. In the discussion about that Prince it was brought out that he had been found guilty of immoral sexual practices in Germany. Yet the Princess Ileana persisted. Queen Marie took her daughter for a short voyage to Cairo.

Marie's opponents, who had learned to use the weapon of publicity as well as she had, brought out the fact that Ileana continued to see the German prince, despite the interdiction of the government. She threatened to marry him. The government threatened to cut off her income if she did so. Every one of Marie's children receives a yearly grant from the treasury of the country.

Queen Marie herself had a new enthusiasm, in the person of a banker, whose name has never been



a very favorable one to Roumanian ears. Nicholas raised his head. He had taken decisions at the regency without consulting his mother.

The news was given out to the world that the prince intended to resign from the regency because he wanted to elope with another man's wife. A little family habit. The Queen, of course, would do her best to make him mend his ways.

And when that wasn't enough, the news was broadcast that he raced about Bucharest in a powerful car, speeding, regardless of traffic rules, bumping into other cars that were in his path, beating up people, slapping women, insulting everybody. He was made to appear like a raving maniac who would have been committed to an asylum were he not of kingly blood.

Marie discovered that Nicholas was actually in correspondence with his brother. The whole world crashed down upon her ears. More photographs. More news. Reams of paper were fed to the news artillery. All the cannons were fired at once.

Close upon that, one of the regents died. And again people shook their heads. No. It was too ridiculous for words. It was all too convenient. True, that regent was an old gentleman, but he had died too suddenly, too conveniently. What would the world say? "We won't be able to obtain any credit."





The Maniu government began to bicker with the Queen. She insisted that she alone must replace the dead regent. If they would not agree to take her into that body she wanted at least to put one more of her own men in.

Another loan was dangling. Roumania was in great need of money. The hesitating, vacillating Maniu government did not know how to put a curb on the demands of the irascible lady. They wanted to avoid scandal. American money was in the balance.

They entered into discussions with Marie. What they wanted was peace, peace until they had made a new loan. Marie also knew that they wanted peace. She was bargaining with them to sell them that peace at a price.

The world has seldom been treated to such a bartering feast. There was no dignity, no shame, no reticence. Fishmongers in markets have never exhibited as little delicacy. Marie's friends, those with a little finer sensibilities, were outraged when foreign newspapers were put under their noses. It was enough to be known as a Roumanian anywhere in the world, in the United States, or in Cuba, in France, in Germany or in Italy, to have people shrug their shoulders.

"Oh! One of Queen Marie's subjects!"

Morals and objects were questioned closely.



Roumanians cried out, "But she is not a Roumanian. She is an Englishwoman!"

I have known good patriotic Roumanians who have preferred to call themselves Bulgarians while this affair lasted. And then the Carolist forces came to the surface.

The peasants began to mutter strange words. Russia or a King. "We won't plow our land." They began to drink a little more than usual. They refused to pay taxes. They killed their chickens and ate them. They came to the city and amused themselves instead of saving their few cents for the winter. They took things. They sabotaged. The government hunted for Communist propagandists. The peasants pointed out to the police the people to whom they owed money. The jails filled. Jails? Did I say jails? Not in the oldest meaning of the word. Dungeons. Cement tombs.

This and that was forbidden to say and to do. Dying was the only action allowed.

The mutterings became louder.

Russia or a King. Carol. Why not? He is a man. A virile man. Virile men make good kings. One of our kings, Stephan, had thirty-four wives.

The Jews! Yes. The Jews. Let's kill the Jews. They have money. Russia or a King of our own. We don't want to be ruled by a child. Let's go to Bucharest.



I saw the delegations of peasants who came to Bucharest to settle matters. They begged from the passerby and slept on the streets. Some had been there for six months and never got any nearer to the palace than its gates. Policemen drove them away, arrested them, beat them.

“But we want to see our King,” they cried.

Some of them never returned to their homes. They still wander over the country and tell the tale of what has happened to them.



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## CHAPTER TWELVE

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DURING several weeks the newspapers and magazines of the United States, and those of the rest of the world, treated their readers to an interesting little story, the scene of which was laid in dear old London. The story, of no importance, was merely an interesting item proving how an enterprising young man can, with a little luck and much perseverance, become very wealthy in a foreign land. It was what the newspapers generally call a "human interest" story.

Towards the end of the war, a young Roumanian gentleman, by the name of Jonescu, came to reside in London. Why in London? There are many sentimental explanations. The young man had lived in Paris for a short time. After weeks of a rather kaleidoscopic life, which included sleeping under bridges and starving, this young gentleman, though not without education, obtained work in a Soho restaurant where he was put to work washing dishes and doing other menial work about the place. He was not exactly fitted for the work, and the work



was not exactly congenial to the man; but it was the best thing for the moment.

One day a stranger came to that little restaurant. He dined well. The food pleased him. The wines agreed with him. The liqueur was just what it was supposed to be. But when the coffee came, the client recriminated. He did not like it. It wasn't good. It wasn't to his taste. A fresh pot of coffee was brought and yet the gentleman was displeased. Had the proprietor of the restaurant been an Englishman, the affair would have ended there. But he was an Italian and wanted to please his customer. He went into the kitchen and made the coffee himself. The client was still displeased.

Suddenly, the dishwasher and plate carrier asked the cook's permission to be allowed to prepare the coffee for the client.

Since everything had been tried to please the diner, Jonescu was told to try his hand. He ground the kernels down fine and prepared the drink according to his own lights. When the steaming cup was presented to the strange gentleman, he inhaled its aroma, tasted it, rolled his eyes and declared that it was the best coffee he had ever drunk.

Then the owner of the restaurant and the cook tasted it. It was wonderful coffee. They had never tasted anything like it. In reality, it was coffee prepared in the Turkish manner, the way it is usually



drunk in Roumania, and which the average Londoner knew nothing about.

The following day, that gentleman returned to the restaurant and brought some friends with him. After a copiously "wet" meal, the stranger turned to his friends and said, "And now for the *pièce de résistance*—the coffee!"

The dishwasher was momentarily relieved of his duties and was asked to prepare the brew. When he had done so and it was served, the other clients also declared that it was the best coffee they had ever tasted. Jonescu was presented to them and handsomely rewarded for his good offices.

These men brought other clients. Within a few days the dishwasher was relieved of his other duties and was elevated to the office of coffee-maker of the restaurant. His name was known and the clients jocularly called the coffee he prepared the "Jonescu coffee."

Placid London can be very romantic. The little Soho restaurant began to be frequented by artists and writers. The good news was spread to the connoisseurs. Jonescu's salary was raised and there were some who pretended to know when the cook, and not Jonescu, prepared the coffee.

Stories began to circulate about the strange young man who worked in this little restaurant. Like most Roumanians, Jonescu spoke a little French and a



little German. He had good manners. His voice was agreeable, cultivated. He was courteous, without being humble, and he wore his clothes well. He was therefore, romantic ladies concluded, a prince in disguise.

It cannot be said that Jonescu discouraged the little stories that were circulated about him. He had an eye for business. He had suffered hunger and starvation too long not to have guessed the advantages that could be derived from such favorable circumstances. And since the clientele of that little restaurant had been attracted by him, he very soon threatened the owner to leave unless he was made a partner to the business. The owner agreed. The restaurant was enlarged and became known as the Jonescu restaurant.

London flocked to it. The food, the wines, the liqueurs improved in quality. The prices also improved. A new set of waiters was engaged; waiters who looked a little more in keeping with the newly decorated place. Jonescu prospered. The restaurant became too small to accommodate all those who clamored to sit at its tables. Another restaurant and another were added to it. The Roumanian gentleman added the coffee business to that of the restaurant, employed his profits carefully, multiplied them, and was soon wealthy enough to buy himself a magnificent suburban estate.



Then Roumanian officials living in London began to take cognizance of him. He was making Roumania famous. He became an important man and his home began to be frequented by political and artistic personages who resided, or happened to be visiting in London.

It is not known what other traffics and businesses Jonescu had added to the restaurant and coffee business, but he must have added some, since it is incredible that he could have become wealthy so rapidly, from coffee and food alone.

Jonescu had political ambitions. His stay in London was not a mere accident, and his ability to acquire wealth was not his only one. That merely showed that a man of genius could apply himself to anything he might choose and outdo the most talented in any profession. Great men are like that.

Jonescu married. His home became the gathering center of the élite—of the élite among the foreigners living in England. The dishwashing episode became ancient history in two years.

The originator of the Jonescu coffee visited the once prince heir to the throne in Paris, and was seen with him in several public places. When questioned, Mr. Jonescu answered that he was free to visit whomsoever he pleased; that while in Paris he had gone to pay his respects to the prince heir, whom he loved, and whose political aims were also





his. He was a patriot, Mr. Jonescu. Successful men are like that. They have opinions on coffee, art, politics. They are strong men. Strong men have opinions.

Shortly after that Mr. Jonescu, who had grown still more wealthy in the interval, speculating on the fluctuating Roumanian currency, and was now very much interested in aviation, received Prince Carol, who had come to return the visit Jonescu had paid him in Paris. Carol's visit had been planned to remain a secret, but somehow the Parisian reporters got hold of the news and the whole world soon knew that Prince Carol and his red-headed friend were being entertained at Jonescu's suburban home, and that some political men had followed him there and were in conference with him. Jonescu became a world figure; because he knew how to prepare coffee in the Turkish fashion.

Bucharest was in a turmoil. Paris was in a turmoil. Things were being plotted at Jonescu's home. Carol, when tracked by reporters, assured them that he had come merely on a friendly visit to Mr. Jonescu; that like any other human being he was free to come and go as he pleased. He asked the world to leave him alone. Soon Scotland Yard men made their appearance on the Jonescu grounds and began to check up on everybody who went in and out and to question the servants of the house a little



more closely and a little more intensively as the hours went by. Mr. Jonescu and his wife protested against this interference. Cables, from Roumania to the press of the world, became more explicit as they became more hysterical, about the intent of the Prince heir.

"Will England permit that her land should be made the jumping off place of one who intends to endanger the security of a friendly nation?"

This was the trend of most of the questions in the foreign press.

Jonescu's life was reviewed in detail and his sudden interest in aviation was discussed. Roumania was in danger because a man who had been unable to make a living in his own country had succeeded in a foreign country. Roumania has never explained the success of some of her exiles otherwise than by the gullibility of foreign countries.

Then the English government was appealed to. (By Queen Marie?) Scotland Yard worked quietly, rapidly, and discovered that arrangements had been made for a plane to wait at Croydon; to take off at any moment Carol might choose.

Scotland Yard detectives proceeded energetically to do what they were ordered to do. They spoke to the former heir to the Roumanian throne in no uncertain tones. They told him that unless he departed immediately by the same route that he had



come, and left the plane where it was, they would expel him from English soil, in their own way. Carol and his entourage protested against this interference, and against the tone which was used, but the men of Scotland Yard were not to be put off. They gave their victim but a few hours in which to pack and go.

And pack and go Carol did. Accompanied by Madame Lupescu he returned to Paris. The Roumanian Ambassador to the French republic, Mr. Diamandi, a friend of Marie's, had had an active part in Carol's expulsion from England. How much the Roumanian ambassador to England was involved is still a secret to many.

This affair lasted but a few days. But how the wires of the press of the world hummed during these hours. How the point was driven home again and again that Carol had actually been expelled from England—that the former Prince heir had been expelled from England!

How this was explained again and again to the people of Roumania! They had been saved from ignominy. Had Carol not been exiled he would have brought the greatest shame upon them. He had behaved in such a manner that a foreign country had expelled him! It was made to appear that England had expelled him because of Madame Lu-



pescu's presence. This was made the excuse of more pogrom against the Jews.

Indirect pressure was being brought upon France to do likewise—to expel Carol. It was pointed out that France too would commit a breach of international etiquette if she allowed a resident guest to plot against the security of a friendly country within the walls of her cities. It was pointed out again and again that eventually Carol would attempt to make a flight from there to Roumania; that French soil would be made the jumping-off place for a coup d'état that might endanger the established order of Roumania. Was France a friend of Roumania or not? Why didn't France follow the example of England?

But France, true to her old principle of giving asylum to political exiles, refused to budge or to take any measures contrary to her old traditions. When it comes to fundamentals, France is the only civilized country of Europe.

When the affair had blown over it was felt in Europe that England had been made a scapegoat. No one could have been absolutely certain that Carol had intended to make a flight from England to Roumania. It was pointed out that he had no reason to put greater distance than was necessary between himself and the country he wanted to reach. It would



have been simpler for Carol to leave from somewhere in France, and thus establish a shorter distance to Bucharest. But Roumanian wiseacres and Queen Marie's friends remarked that the multimillionaire, Ionescu, had insisted that the flight be made from England—if possible from his own front door. That he who had contributed most of the money for this expedition, wanted to derive from it the greatest possible benefits; increase the reputation of the Ionescu coffee and the clientele of his restaurants. Ionescu, they said, wanted some publicity; wanted to advertise himself.

The whole affair smacked a little of the ridiculous. However, in the light of the things that happened later on, the Ionescu-Croydon-Carol affair had been as serious as Queen Marie had guessed in her fright. Marie was right. Her intuition if not her mind had guided her will. Passionate women have deep seated intuitions.

The reason Carol had preferred to fly from Croydon instead of from Le Bourget or any other French airport, was that he wanted to put Madame Lupescu in security before leaving. Ionescu had promised to take care of the red-headed lady until he received orders telling him what to do with her, from his newly made King in Bucharest. Carol had hoped to obtain a little more secrecy for his movements in London than he could have obtained in Paris. How



the information had leaked out remains a secret.

Some say that Ionescu himself, at the last moment, thought it advisable to break the secrecy and had imparted all the tidings to newspaper correspondents. Others still accuse Madame Lupescu of duplicity, and point out that she acted not only because she was in the service of Carol's enemies, but also because she was madly in love with the Prince, and did not want to relinquish him even when an opportunity had presented itself to him to regain his place on the throne.

"That woman loves him," people said, and pronounced the word love with the same intonation as they would have said "hate."

Upon his return to Paris, Carol denied vigorously his "London intentions." He affirmed again and again that he felt that the time was not very far off when the Roumanian people would awaken and send for him.

"I will not go there by plane nor will I go there secretly. They know where I am when they want me. I shall wait here until they send a special train from Bucharest to Paris to get me. Under no other conditions will I return to Roumania."

He lied. But then a King must also be somewhat of a diplomat.

Queen Marie made one of her special visits to Paris, and though she never even had a glimpse of



Carol, the newspapers reported that the two had greeted one another affectionately and that they had come to a perfect understanding.

Understanding as to what?

Carol had been very anxious to see his son. He was pining away for his son. The royal mother assured the world that she would not deprive her oldest son of such pleasure. Yet, lest this react in Carol's favor, because he showed such parental solicitude, Marie also spread the news that the abandoned wife, Queen Mother Helen, was now studying to become a nurse; indeed she was preparing herself to enter a nunnery where she wanted to live out the rest of her shattered life. The saint. Helen the saint. Helen the magnificent. Helen the pure. Helen the wonderful. All the adjectives were used. Poor Carol. He was blind. He did not see his wife's great qualities; his wife's and his mother's. He had abandoned his family. He had abandoned his country to satisfy his insatiable carnal passions. Zizi, Mirel, Magda, and there were others—yes many. He was already too friendly with the actress Elvira Popescu. Elvira Popescu! Another exile who had not succeeded in Bucharest but had fooled the Frenchmen.

And the life of poor Elvira became a red page in a book of obscenities!



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## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

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OCTAVE MIRBEAU once told the story of a great painter who had never painted a picture. Mirbeau tells of a young man who had shown considerable talent while studying at the Academy. His teachers singled him out from the other students as the one man who would eventually do great things.

"Watch him closely. Ecce Homo."

The students clustered about him and turned to him with their work to ask his criticism. And what the young man said was law.

"Waste no time on trifles. Do great work—or nothing."

But the more the young man was praised the more difficult he found it to do his own work. Almost everything he wanted to do was trifling compared to what he was supposed to be able to do.

Eventually this mouth to mouth propaganda spread all over France. Everybody spoke of this great young painter whose work overshadowed that of all the painters of the present and the past. And





no one saw his works. He was called a master of the brush long before he had done anything masterly. The young man, burdened by the responsibility that had been loaded upon his shoulders, retired to his garret, from which he emerged but rarely. His comrades, seeing but little of him, spoke even more of him.

"He is painting the great picture, the greatest ever painted."

Years passed and the man's reputation grew. The reputation became the tradition of that particular school. The young painter passed from youth to middle age. Though not a man had seen anything of his work, he was continually referred to as "the great master." His rare appearances among his friends were greeted with tremendous enthusiasm. Painters who had already achieved fame, came to him with their work and begged him for an opinion.

Ultimately, Mirbeau tells, a friend penetrated to that garret when the painter was ill. On an easel was a tremendous canvas—all blank. It had been on that easel for twenty years. The palette and the brushes were dry. They hadn't been touched for years. The artist would have painted what there was in him to paint, had he not concluded that he could never do anything to equal the praise that had been bestowed upon him for so many years.



That no matter what he would have done, it would have ruined his reputation forever. He could never paint what he was expected to paint. He had permitted his friends to overpraise him. Only the masterpiece of masterpieces could have satisfied even the least critical, and great masterpieces are not produced consciously. The great painter died without ever doing anything.

I don't know why this story comes to my mind now, but I do know that it has always come to mind whenever I have thought of Mr. Titulescu; the present Roumanian Ambassador to England and the latest chairman of the Peace Congress at Geneva.

Mr. Titulescu's canvas is not totally blank, but neither is it what his friends claim that it could be.

Some twenty odd years ago, Mr. Titulescu emerged from a group of trained young diplomats, as a most promising statesman. Great hopes were settled on him. Members of the party to which he belonged saw in him their future leader; the Moses who would lead them out of the desert into the promised land. The Saviour.

Unable to down him, because his reputation had grown beyond anything he had already done, the elder statesmen shook their heads and agreed that he was a great man, but:

"We will have to wait a few years until he matures."



Curiously enough, the opposition also had great respect for young Mr. Titulescu, and wished that they had him as the prospective leader of their party. They were very considerate when they were not in agreement with him.

In the heat of disputes, politicians called one another thief and rascal and accused one another of all sorts of crimes and robberies, yet they never said anything of that sort about Mr. Titulescu. With him they merely disagreed. They could find no flaw in his character or in his conduct. At worst he was an honest man who held on to mistaken ideas.

Immensely tall, with a head like that of some overgrown Chinese giant, Mr. Titulescu was never accused of using backstair methods to climb to his eminence. He never did have to apply for posts. They were showered upon him. He had only to choose. He visited these shores some years ago and used the authority he did not have to change the personnel of the Embassy to suit his own whims.

Eventually, Mr. Titulescu became the Roumanian ambassador to England. There was no better man for that post. He was eminently fitted for it. Everybody said so.

Whenever Roumania was in political hot water, the political parties directed their eyes to him as the man to save them from trouble. The news-



papers and speeches in Parliament, elevated him above every political man in the country.

"Let us but get Mr. Titulescu and he will know how to take us out of this impasse."

"Titulescu. Let us call Titulescu to power."

No doubt Mr. Titulescu's ambition for the Premiership of Roumania was just as great at the beginning of his career, as the ambition of other young statesmen, not his equal, and by far his inferior. But the reputation that was given to him was such that unless he really accomplished a miracle, he would degrade himself for ever.

Mr. Titulescu refused to accept the premiership whenever the position was offered to him; either demanding conditions that could not be fulfilled, or by claiming that he was not in good health.

"Ask me when I am well again."

He never refused point blank.

In this manner the Roumanian diplomats, statesmen and people were led to believe that conditions of the country could be changed at once if Mr. Titulescu's health would permit him to accept the premiership. In every serious crisis this hope was dangled in the air; like the bundle of hay in the story of the racing donkey.

"We will appeal to Mr. Titulescu. Now is the time."

But while he was the awaited Messiah, he also



became a threatening danger. Statesmen and diplomats were frightened every time they approached him.

"What if he accepts? What if his abilities really are such that he can accomplish miracles? Then our situation would become impossible for ever and ever."

"What if he fails?" others asked.

Yet there was nothing they could use against him—nothing they could do except to overpraise him. This overpraise has completely nullified the abilities of an extremely able person who was and is too shrewd not to know that he could never fulfill all the hopes that were vested in him. He had to continue to refuse the offers made to him.

"I am not well. I am ill."

I can conceive of no more devilishly clever move than that used by his friends and his enemies. Titulescu became a sort of political god to whom they prayed and whose help they begged for, but hoped he would never come down to earth. Once when he almost said yes, they cried that he was too big a man. That even the Great Roumania of today was too small for him.

"He would waste himself in so small a country. He should have been born in France, in England or in the United States. He is a giant, born too big for his country. To become the premier of a



country like Roumania would be a condescension."

Mr. Titulescu shook his heavy head. This powerful giant had to claim bad health and had to continue to refuse the leadership of the government of his country.

"I could not do my best in the physical condition in which I am now. Ask me again. There will be other opportunities."

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Prior to Prince Carol's now well-known flight from Paris to Bucharest, the Maniu government felt that something had to be done; that some radical move had to be made to wrench the country out of the threatening anarchy. The small foreign loans had only enabled them to stave off the ultimate end from day to day without ameliorating fundamentally the economic situation. They were less than palliatives, less than the proverbial drop in the bucket. What the Maniu government was chiefly concerned with was with saving itself; by quieting the spirits of the people, by hushing up the voice of revolt that was becoming louder and louder. They had done the "all the people all the time" stuff too vigorously.

Of course the Prince heir had many friends in the Maniu government who argued that if he returned to the country everything would immediately change for the better.



Mr. Maniu is an old man, encumbered with a legal mind that works slowly and in well-grooved paths. He did not readily acquiesce to the demands of his friends; first, because Carol's return would be illegal—King Michael was legally the king of Roumania, and he had sworn allegiance to him; second because of the condition of affairs between Carol and his wife, Helen. Of course Helen had legally divorced her husband, but Mr. Maniu is a Catholic and does not believe in divorce. (And there are people who say that he does not even believe in marriage. He has never been married.)

"Carol," he argued, "should be brought back only as a last resort when the ruin of the country might hang in the balance."

There was still Mr. Titulescu left. Emissaries were sent to him. While these emissaries were on their way, the country was agog. There were daily bulletins about Mr. Titulescu's coming to Roumania to take over the premiership. The emissaries had long conferences with him. Mr. Titulescu would not let himself be persuaded. They pointed out to him that he was the last hope. The more they urged him to accept, the less he was inclined to listen to them. His enemies in Bucharest were singing his praises even louder than his friends were. God him could not have accomplished what they said Titulescu could; if he so desired.



"Mr. Titulescu will be able to do anything he pleases. He could be the premier, the dictator, the president of the republic—there is nothing Mr. Titulescu will not be able to do. We rely implicitly on his sagacity, on his devotion, on his ability."

Had Napoleon risen from the dead he would not have dared to accept so much responsibility. Mr. Titulescu was not asked to try to remedy conditions. He was told that he alone could save the country.

Mr. Titulescu, like Octave Mirbeau's painter, had to remain sitting before that tremendous canvas on the easel, with his brushes and paint before him, and refuse to paint the picture that he was expected to; refuse to paint the masterpiece that would please his friends and his enemies. If Roumanian diplomats and statesmen used only half the intelligence to rule their country that they use to ruin it and to paralyze those who could do something for it, Roumania would be one of the most prosperous and ideal countries of Europe.

Mr. Titulescu's refusal was not immediately imparted to the public. The emissaries were kept out of the country to lull the people a little longer.

But when his refusal could no longer be hidden, the Liberals, who had not banked too much on Maniu's Catholicism to keep Carol out of the country, saw that they were faced with the inevitable. They hid their heads in the sand and refused to see





what was before them. They knew what the inevitable was.

Queen Marie made one more attempt to wedge herself into the government of the country. She made one more attempt to bring Prince Nicholas under her heel. That young son of hers was defying her openly now. He had joined the Carolists, and he was probably one of the few who prayed that Mr. Titulescu would refuse. The feverish secret activities of the Carolists had become so feverish, they were remarked by every one. At that time no government would have dared to submit the army to a test and demand that it reaffirm its allegiance to King Michael.

Queen Helen was one of the most feverish persons. She was the center of attention. What would Carol do if he returned? The Carolists still said that he would merely enter the Regency to replace his brother and to supervise the interests of his son, the King of Roumania. But very few people were fooled by their assertions.

One more attempt was made to convince Mr. Titulescu that his place was in Bucharest. This time the Queen herself appealed to him, though she did not have any particular love for the man whose popularity threatened the Hohenzollern house with extinction.



Mr. Titulescu refused. He could not accept. He was too ill.

Helen turned to her political friends, to the clique that had formed about her, and demanded counsel. She was panicky. She was afraid for the life of her son even more than for his future. She was afraid for her own life. While pretending to quiet her, her friends, and her clique, ran under cover. They were unwilling to compromise themselves more than they were already compromised. They saw clearly the writing on the wall. Helen had not been any too friendly to Carol and what she had said about him had been repeated to him. Her petition for a divorce was a diatribe against her husband in which she recited her griefs, her disappointments and the humiliation he had submitted her to by his faithlessness to her.

That Carol had asked her to join him in his exile in Paris—had asked her to come with the child—and that she had refused, and preferred to stay at the palace instead of being with her repentant husband, that she did not say in her petition for divorce.

She had put herself entirely under the tutelage of Queen Marie, who had directed her activities and spoken for her. Reports of her despair and sadness and of how broken-hearted she was were continually



fed to newspapers and magazines. She had willingly, or unwillingly, done quite as much to make out of Carol a ridiculous gay Lothario in the eyes of the world as Marie had. She had won the kingship for her son, at the price of a husband. And now that husband was rising from the dead.

I must recall here that her recriminations about his unfaithfulness were rather idle. She and Carol had had a prenuptial agreement that he was to retain his "sentimental" freedom even after they were married. Though she knew of Carol's marriage to Zizi Lambrino, she permitted that young woman to frequent the palace after she herself was married to the Prince. There had never been any secrecy about Carol's relations with Zizi after his marriage to Helen. I must recall here again the letter Carol wrote to Madame Lambrino, when he told her of his engagement to the Princess.

"She has the same view of life as I have. Our marriage is but a formal affair."

It is quite possible that Helen changed her opinions on marital relations after Carol had left. Carol, apparently, had not changed his. That agreement could only be made null if both agreed to change their opinions on that subject.

Carol still believes that Helen was a party to the plot of his mother when he had been exiled with Magda Lupescu. He would have preferred, then,



to go into exile with his wife. No one could have prevented Helen from joining him when he asked her to.

These things were clear enough in the minds of Helen's friends. They accused her, now, of having been Marie's dupe and of having allowed them to dupe her. Sagacity and shrewdness were higher qualities than faithfulness.

"She is a fool."

Meanwhile things were coming to a head.

The ambassadors to foreign countries were sounded out as to their attitude towards Carol's eventual return to the throne. Many of the diplomats stationed in foreign countries had always been in favor of Carol, and those who had not been in favor, came to the conclusion that since Titulescu had refused; there was nothing else the Maniu government could do. They bowed to the inevitable. Diplomats have words to explain everything. When it is not "de jure" it is "de facto."

The army was sounded out. Armies are always in favor of a dictator. Carol was supposed to be a Fascist. The Fascist movement in Roumania has many adherents. The officers of the army had felt rather ridiculous to serve under a nine year old boy, flanked by two tottering old men and a young man in whom they never had much confidence. The army was afraid of Titulescu. Who knows, but that Titulescu's



refusal was based on his lack of confidence in the army? Titulescu was supposed to be somewhat of a republican. It was whispered about that if Titulescu became the premier the army would be disbanded.

"He will make friends with Russia."

The Carolist party insinuated:

"He has been away from our country too long to know its sentiments; its royalist sentiments."

Marie was rapidly putting her house and her affairs in order. She tried one more diversion. Did I say one more? She tried twenty at the same time. She left nothing untried of her bag of tricks. She even revived the scandal between her daughter and the German prince to create a diversion. She would have imitated Lady Godiva if that would have helped.

Prince Shtirbey was not idling. He screwed down tight the financial vise. He hammered at every wheel of industry to break the cogs that made it run. They tried to frighten Carol as they had frightened Titulescu. They tried to convey to him the impression that the conditions in Roumania were such that it was humanly impossible for any man to come and remedy them as quickly as the people expected them to be remedied. They even told him his life was in danger if he stepped on the soil of his country.

Only one who has lived in a country while it is



going through such crises and has breathed the foul air of intrigue and machination can have a faint idea of what went on then. The panic of land people on a ship during a storm at sea is only a mild disturbance compared to the panic of the Roumanians during those days, those weeks and months of doubt, when they did not know whether they were doomed to ruin, bankruptcy, revolution or annihilation.

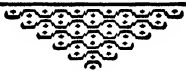
One never can quite fathom the secret actions and reactions of groups of men who, though acting in the name of a people they claim to govern, act only in their own interests . . . without much regard for their neighbors or consequences.



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## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

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FRANCE's great tradition of hospitality to political exiles was not the only reason she refused to expel from its borders Carol of Hohenzollern.

Despite the woven intrigues of Roumania's politicians and diplomats, France is undoubtedly the best informed country about what is really going on in the land of the Walachs. She is occasionally better informed than the Roumanian statesmen themselves about the feeling of the people, and seldom makes a bad guess as to which way the wind is blowing.

Roumania is on the border line of Russia. The French government has always felt and still feels that there is danger of a possible alliance between Bolshevik Russia and Republican Germany. France has to keep Roumania on her side so that in an emergency Roumania's armies may be able to attract some of the Muscovite armies and hold them at bay until France makes ready to defend herself. Indirectly, therefore,



Roumania is one of France's frontier countries. French generals, as well as French statesmen, always keep an open eye, and the good one at that, on the Roumanian armies and on its arsenals. Now, when the interests of Roumania are severed from those of Germany, it is France that is supplying arms and ammunition, cannon, powder and aeroplanes to Roumania. The railroad lines of strategic importance are always kept in better condition than the other lines. General Franchet d'Esperey is a frequent visitor to Roumania where he never fails to make friendly inspection of the artilleries, infantry and aviation corps.

Roumania is supposed, in an emergency, to be able to put close to a million men on foot. No matter what expense the French government might incur, no matter what the amount of loans she may be forced to subscribe to and underwrite, it is still considerably cheaper than to keep an additional army of a million men in her own country. Roumanian mothers never know that they are giving birth to French soldiers when sons are born to them. Yet such is the case, nevertheless.

While Carol was in France, the French government kept itself well informed as to the possibilities of his return and ascension to the throne. And when the French foreign office realized that it was impossible for the opposition to keep him away much





longer from the place which belonged to him, France began to look with favorable eyes to Carol's eventual assumption of power. It would have been an irreparable blunder to antagonize the future King of a country whose soldiers were so vital to France's existence.

It was well known that Carol had Fascist leanings and that his friends were all inclined in that direction. France did not forget that while General Averescu was Premier of Roumania, that country had entered into a pact with Italy and that the Walachians were, as a consequence, tremendously enthusiastic about Mussolinism.

It was also known that Carol was rather friendly toward the Hungarians. At one time, when he had quarrelled with his family, he had intrigued himself almost to the throne of the Magyars, and would have become the King of Hungary if Diamandi and some of his other associates had not betrayed him to Queen Marie.

Carol had remained on friendly terms with the Hungarians and it was known that he planned to cooperate more closely with his former enemies, as soon as he got the power into his hands.

France knew what such alliances meant against her. A new alignment of Italy, Austria, Hungary and Roumania would put her at the mercy of Germany; put her in a position where she could no



longer oppose Germany's cry that the Versailles Treaty must be revised.

The combined population of these four countries is greater than the population of Germany, and would have therefore doubled the "over the Rhine" enemies.

Time is the greatest asset in the game played by statesmen and diplomats. It is possible that such a political alignment will become a fact in the near future. But so many things are subject to change, if given time, that it was to France's interest to postpone or retard such a union of the four powers that would undoubtedly have acted against her.

Behind the mask of a gay Lothario hides a shrewd and calculating statesman. France's refusal to agree to the demands of Queen Marie that her son be exiled was more than a compliment to Carol—it was an encouragement. Words could not have been more clearly spoken. It was as if France had said,

"We believe that you will soon be on the throne of Roumania. We will do nothing to stop you from achieving your aim. We shall be glad to know you the King of your country and our ally."

That he remained in France, and even bought himself a château there, was a tacit acquiescence to France's attitude.

If we hear less of Roumanian Fascism than we



would have heard had Carol returned to Bucharest six months or a year sooner, it is because the new King has a sense of loyalty. He would not easily, or without deep reason, ally himself with the enemies of a people who have given him hospitality and treated him as magnanimously as the French had treated him during his stay there.

The Roumanian armies will therefore continue to be what they have been in the past; the advance posts of France. Unless something unforeseen happens. What, for instance? France's refusal to lend Roumania more money or to extend more credits or to guarantee loans? The Roumanian-Italian alliance is still in vigor.

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To those to whom the following story might sound too much like an excerpt from the scenario of a musical comedy, I want to say that the facts were given to me by a Minister of State and two high functionaries of the Court of King Carol, and that this information was imparted to me in the presence of several American business men. I am amazed that it has remained a secret so long. . . . Secret!

During my last stay in Bucharest and in Paris, I verified the story. It checked in every detail,



though there were several variations and changes in the names of the heroes of the comedy.

Had the Belascos, the von Stroheims and the Schuberts joined heads to find unexploited musical comedy situations, they could not have invented a more hilarious trick ending to a dramatic situation. The Viennese and Parisian comedy makers are completely outclassed. Not even in the Ruritania moving pictures has anything ever been seen to approach the ridiculousness of the last scene.

When one of the older regents had died and Queen Marie had insisted again and again that she too ought to be included in the Regency, she was told that a Latin people would never submit to being ruled by a woman; it was possible in England and in Holland, but not in Roumania. The Latins have always considered women incapable of holding such office.

Marie fumed and stormed. She was insulted. She demanded that an exception be made in her case and recalled the celebrated phrase of a statesman that "there was only one man in Roumania, and that was Queen Marie."

But Maniu shook his head slowly and deliberately and did not budge. When she protested and told him that Roumania's aggrandizement was chiefly due to her, Maniu told her that the reason they



could not include her in the Regency was that the people would revolt; that they would never submit to being ruled by the "Grey Eminence," Prince Shtirbey.

That ended the discussion. Marie had the last word by saying that one does not bargain with the throne. One either gives what the throne demands or is in a state of revolt.

Nicholas, who had been so malleable, who had been like wax in the hands of that wilful mother of his, sided now with her enemies, was in correspondence with his brother, and the friend of the leader of her inveterate enemies. Nicholas too began to reproach her with her conduct, using almost the same words his brother had once used. There were some nice family discussions between Mama, her son and her daughters.

It is an open secret that Nicholas met the conspirators in the home of one of his women friends, a married woman not exactly of noble blood, but of noble bearing. The house of Hohenzollern in Roumania seems to have been cursed. Every male member, beginning with Prince Ferdinand, had fallen in love with a Roumanian woman before marrying one of princely blood.

The publicity campaign launched by Queen Marie against Nicholas was not expected to accomplish anything; it was just an act of revenge. He was por-



trayed as a drunkard, a degenerate, a reckless driver, a hooligan and a street brawler. Every daily paper, outside of the border of Roumania, carried a daily item about Nicholas' doings. He was made to appear as a combination of Al Capone and Jesse James.

True, he was no angel, Nicholas. Yet not one-tenth of what was said against him was true. Not a word about his escapades had been heard before the lid of the scandals was ripped open.

Nicholas's reply to that campaign was an even more intensive correspondence with his brother, and an even greater activity with the conspirators who worked to bring Carol back to the throne.

For some reason or other Carol did not think it was the appropriate moment to descend upon Bucharest. His friends had to argue and bring pressure. Carol just happened to have found a fresh interest in Paris. The theater now interested him even more than sports; especially so because a beautiful Roumanian actress, Elvira Popescu, had attracted his attention. Both Elvira and Carol protested loudly against the insinuation that there was anything more between them than friendship and devotion to the theater. But his friends and many others knew better. Elvira's husband, the actor manager and playwright, left for Berlin. Carol was a frequent visitor to her dressing room.



Carol did not appreciate the Carolists' insistence when they urged him to settle upon his shoulders the responsibilities of ruling a country on the verge of bankruptcy. He knew the conditions in Roumania and knew how it had been, and was being looted. He had nothing to gain by going back home. The throne, which would have held the fascination of great glory if his mother had not besmirched the tinsel and ermine, was but a drab exchange for what he already had. He knew that he was better off as a commoner in Paris than he would be as a King in Bucharest. However, there were his mother and his enemies. It was difficult to let go by an occasion to pay off all the humiliations they had submitted him to and all the pain they had inflicted upon him. To rule those who had persecuted him was a great temptation.

He had many scores to settle, with men and with women. People who had betrayed him, who had robbed him, who had mocked him, who had intrigued against him and who had enmeshed him in a dozen unsavory affairs felt a little too secure under the Shtirbey-Marie wings. He was embittered against Helen, his wife, who had allied herself with his mother, and had treated him shabbily and had heaped ridicule and blame upon him.

Of course there was that little son of his; legally the King of Roumania. Carol must have thought



of the atmosphere in which the child would be brought up! He must have remembered how Milan, the former King of Serbia, had been treated by his family, when his son had been put in his stead on the throne. Milan Obrenovitch died in exile; one of the most ridiculous ex-Majesties in the world.

Nicholas's letters and emissaries, as well as his Carolist friends, continued their pressure upon the Prince heir.

"Titulescu has refused. Now is your chance."

"You are the only hope."

"If you come now you will be hailed as the saviour of the country."

"You can do anything you please without any opposition."

"All your enemies will run for cover."

There were daily meetings and conferences in Carol's villa, and there were other meetings and conferences at a well-known Parisian hotel.

Carol asked Elvira Popescu to return to Bucharest, to the National Theatre. Elvira had herself photographed with the future King and promised. She too had some scores to settle in Roumania. She had been howled down from the stage once—but that is another story.

I have been told that Magda Lupescu was informing the Queen, and her representative in Paris, Am-





bassador Diamandi, of everything Carol said and did at that time, and was giving the names of all the visitors that came to his home. Magda Lupescu was angry. Carol was neglecting her for another woman. In addition to Magda there were other women who spied on him—women who were paid to play with Carol in order to gain his confidence. One of these ladies has since given an interview to the press in which she told half truths of what had happened. She did not deny that she had been in the pay of Queen Marie, she gloried in her servitude. Some day we shall hear of as many pretenders to the Roumanian throne as we have heard from the Bourbon family—of the right and the wrong side of the blanket.

One day a young Roumanian officer in civilian clothes came to see the exiled prince at his home at Neuilly, near the gates of Paris. They had been playmates, he and Carol. Carol had absolute confidence in him. This young officer gave Carol a complete and detailed report of the conditions in the country and the feeling of the army. What the others had been unable to do; what Carol's brother had not been able to accomplish at that time, this man accomplished. He convinced his prince that he would be received with open arms when he returned, and assured him that the people would gladly listen to his explanation of the forgery affair.



More, no such explanation would be necessary. The people no longer believed that their prince was a forger and a grafter.

It was agreed that the young officer should return to Roumania and make the necessary arrangements. When all would be ready he was to flash a message to Carol. The young officer, an extremely ingenious young man, and an active one, went to work immediately.

A few days later Prince Nicholas wired to his brother:

"Now is the time."

That wire was sent from a city beyond the Roumanian border. Any telegraph operator in Roumania would have relayed it first to his chief of police. It must be noted here that the chiefs of police are the most powerful adjuncts of the government. They rule.

Queen Marie, who was informed of what was being done behind her back, took the train and went to Oberammergau to see the Passion Play. She did not want to be in Roumania when Carol returned.

Close upon that telegram there appeared at King Carol's villa the same young officer, Carol's friend. He took the former heir to the throne aside and told him:

"I have arranged everything to the minutest de-



tail. I can put you back on the throne if you agree to obey me implicitly for a time. You must obey without questioning. At the end of that period I shall obey you for the rest of my life. Are you ready?"

Carol agreed. This friend inspired confidence. He was a doer, not a talker.

Before Madame Lupescu had come down from one of the rooms in the upper story of the house to look at the visitor, the royal lover had stepped into the highpowered automobile that was waiting outside. He waved goodbye to her.

"You will understand later."

The engine snorted. The wheels turned.

"Goodbye."

The Lupescu wept. She stormed. She became hysterical. Then she went to the telephone.

"Hello. Hello. Hello."

Two hours later the whole world knew that Prince Carol had flown back to Roumania. France had been made the jumping off ground for the coup d'état that endangered the security of a friendly nation.

Queen Marie was at Oberammergau watching the Passion Play.

Had the Bratianus still been in power the streets of Bucharest would have been bristling with machine guns again. They would have known how



to prevent Carol's return. With them it was a question of life and death. But Premier Maniu was in power and his government was tottering. Carol had to be brought back or the Liberals would have swept into power. Mironescu, an old friend of Carol's, was Secretary of State. The Carolists were in the saddle. Titulescu had refused to accept the premiership. Maniu had become a figure-head.

Things had been well engineered. The Parliament was in an uproar when the news of Carol's return reached Bucharest. They knew what was happening but refused to believe. The army could not be relied upon. The army had been switched to Carol's party. The army hoped Carol would proclaim himself the dictator, that he would organize a military government. That same Parliament had decreed two years before that Carol's name was not to be mentioned; that henceforth he was a closed question."

At the beginning of this interdiction the newspapers that had favored Carol's return tried to circumvent the order by saying "The 'closed question' has been seen in Paris," or "the 'closed question' is still wintering in Nice." Then even that was forbidden. When the news of Carol's flight from Paris was broadcast in Roumania, the censors forbade its publication after one of the newspapers had ap-



peared with the announcement that the "closed question" was observed flying eastward from Le Bourget, the aviation field near Paris.

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The plane bearing Prince Carol was compelled to make a forced landing not far from its destination.

The Chief of Police of that town, bewildered by what had happened, telephoned to the Minister of Justice at Bucharest:

"Hello, hello. With the band of the Eleventh Regiment of Infantry ahead of him and the rest of the regiment behind, the 'closed question' is marching towards Bucharest. What shall I do?"

Well! What could be done!

"Do nothing."

The Minister of Justice knew all about it. He hung up. He disconnected his telephone receiver. He wouldn't be bothered.

The news could be suppressed no longer. Those who felt themselves guilty began to pack rapidly their belongings, stuffing bags and trunks and calling to their chauffeurs to get the cars ready.

Those who had drawn in their horns let them out.

"Our King is coming. Carol is on his way. Wait and see."



The rumor spread that Carol, who had been converted to Fascist methods, intended to have the guilty ones shot first and then tried. No city in Europe can become so hysterical as Bucharest. What was rumor was soon believed to be a certainty. They already heard the shots. When a tire burst in front of Prince Shtirbey's house, the inhabitants fainted. Doors and windows were shut tight. Houses and shops emptied themselves rapidly and people massed themselves in the streets to acclaim the return of the prodigal. They wanted it to be seen that they applauded. They fought like mad men to be in the first rows of the crowd. They wanted him to see them. The stupendous reception Carol got was as spontaneous as was the reception of Lindbergh when he came flying down on Le Bourget. I was at the French flying field on that memorable occasion and I know what it was.

Long before the band was heard playing the national anthem the enthusiastic populace of Bucharest was wild with joy. Peasants from surrounding villages filled the streets. The army was out in parade uniform. They were glad Carol was returning and were happy to know that those whom they hated and who had oppressed them for so long would be brought to justice; whatever justice he, Carol, would choose. Had Carol's enemies shown any opposition, rivers of blood would have covered



the streets. Had Queen Marie been there and opposed her son, they would have torn her to pieces. But Marie was safely away; weathering the storm in absence. She was not to be caught napping.

The army, which had sworn allegiance to King Michael and the Regency, forgot its oath and was now behind Carol. They acclaimed him King, though they still had a King.

When the carriage bearing Carol appeared, the Bucharesters went wild. They would have mobbed him in their eagerness to approach him had not the soldiers defended him with their bayonets. Smiling broadly, the prodigal stood up in the slow-moving carriage, bowed right and left, raised his hat and saluted. He looked exuberant. He was happy. And everybody was happy. They had waited for him. He would clean house soon. He would sell their wheat. He would instil hope in the industrialists who had closed their factories. He was a King, a real King.

The gates of the palace were wide open. Prince Nicholas received him. Their meeting was touching. They embraced and kissed again and again. The same lackeys and chamberlains who had turned their backs on Prince Carol a few years before, now welcomed him, bowing to the ground and moaning, "Your Majesty, Your Majesty." Outside the popu-



lace continued to acclaim the returned King. They wanted to see the two brothers kiss again. They would not leave the palace grounds. The streets were black with people. The brass bands, of all the regiments, played continuously.

“Long live the King. Long live our King.”

Half an hour after he had arrived, the King appeared again on the balcony to bow to the applause of the populace. And he had to return again and again.

“Nicholas. Prince Nicholas. We want to see our Prince Nicholas.”

The brothers appeared on the balcony and embraced.

The people were hungry for the sight of their King. They wanted to see whether he had aged much while he had been away. Some said that he had grown paler. Others, that his mustache had become thicker.

Grizzled peasants said that he looked more like a man than he ever had. He had gone forth a young fellow and had come back a man.

“Oh, we are lucky to have such a one as he for King.”

“His affairs of the heart? It is nobody’s business.”

They had once had a King who had boasted of thirty-two wives. But he had been a mighty King: Stephan the Great.





They felt that everything would change overnight. He would sell their wheat. Yes. He would do that. He would compel the Jews to buy their wheat.

And now the statesmen began to arrive at the palace.

Prince Nicholas shooed them away.

"King Carol would not see any one until the following day."

He had work to do. Tomorrow. He would then convene parliament and have a message from the throne ready. Parliament should prepare to make his return and assumption of sceptre and throne legal. His Majesty ordered that they hold themselves in readiness to do so.

The King's orders. Finally they had a King who ordered. They were glad. The statesmen were satisfied. Carol shouldered responsibilities. He always had.

The populace would not be driven away. They wanted another look at their King.

Time and again his Majesty had to appear on the balcony and bow and smile and bow again.

"Long live King Carol."

"Long live the King."

"Long live our King."

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Late that night, two men appeared at a back door of the palace. One of them was in military uniform, and the other had his cap over his eyes and the collar of his trench coat well over his ears. The man who watched that secret entrance and its passageway looked at them. Only the people of the royal household could pass that door. At a word from the officer in uniform the watchman opened the door and stepped aside.

A moment later the two men entered the room where Prince Nicholas sat at a table with his Majesty.

And then one of the gentlemen who had just entered took off his cap and lowered the collar of his coat.

It was the real Carol.

The one who had come on the first plane, and had bowed to the ovations of the people, was a French actor disguised to look like Carol. The King's friends had refused to permit him to risk his head. Had the affair been a fiasco, or had some fanatic sent a bullet crashing into the breast of the prodigal, it would have been classed as an unfortunate hoax on the part of Carol's partisans.

Carol had promised to obey implicitly the young officer who had taken charge of his return.

And now the King turned to the young officer:

"Have I fulfilled my agreement?"



The young officer clicked his heels together, saluted, and said:

"I am at your orders from now on, Your Majesty."

The first order His Majesty issued was to tell his brother,

"Tell this man to take off his mustache before he leaves this room."

And while the actor was being hustled out through another back door and sent on his way to Paris, the real Carol appeared on the balcony to bow to the ovations.

Evidently, he did not bow as well as the actor had. Bystanders remarked that he was tired.

"Now let's go home and let the King sleep."

"He needs a rest."

"He has come flying from Paris."

"He is tired. There is heavy work ahead of him."

"He has to sell our wheat. He has to force the Jews to buy our wheat."

And now, Belascos, von Stroheims and Shuberts, could you have thought out this trick ending? Why not send scouts to hire the man who had evolved the plan? He has the imagination needed to create marvelous pictures, and to suggest the text of a hilarious comic opera or musical comedy.

A dozen officers now claim the honor of having done what one had done. One day I was told it was one man, and the following day that it was



another. On a morning a young lieutenant appeared at my hotel to assure me that it was he and no one else. I don't know—he may have been an impostor, and it may have been the real man.

Now that the real King was home and the loud hoorays had died down and the crowd had been dissipated, the work began. Laborers in overalls invaded the dowager queen Marie's apartments and began to tear down the wires of half a dozen private telephones which were stretched between the royal palace and the home and the offices of Prince Shtirbey.

There were telephone receivers in the most unimaginable places in the Queen's boudoir. She had acted out the plots and counter plots of the penny dreadfuls which had been her literary fare, and which she had always wanted to write. She had played out the mysteries of her own melodramatic plots. There was a telephone receiver under the wash bowl. Another under the bathtub.

The workmen had to break open the walls to get at the secret telephone wires.

The ladies in waiting to the Queen, who were somewhere else when the prodigal King entered the palace, burst into her Majesty's apartment and in their high pitched voices demanded to know how these overalled men dared to invade the sanctum sanctorum of Her Divine Holiness.



While pulling out one of the wires, a workman turned and said:

"We have orders from our Majesty."

"Majesty?" questioned the women. "Has her Majesty Queen Marie ordered you to destroy the panels of her boudoirs?"

"No, His Majesty King Carol has ordered it."

The women fled in consternation.

Would he shoot them, hang them or burn them alive? They dragged themselves on their knees to his rooms.

"We have always loved you. We have obeyed our Queen, but we have always loved you."

The following day King Carol, flanked by his brother, Prince Nicholas, appeared before parliament. He ordered the legislature to dismiss the regency. He ordered the deputies and senators to abrogate the law which had made his son Michael, King of Roumania. He ordered them to vacate his own letters of renunciation and abdication. Then he declared himself King. Parliament acclaimed.

The few voices that arose in protest, those of former Prime Minister Vintila Bratianu and some of his followers, were quickly hushed.

Carol of Hohenzollern was no longer the "closed question." He was King of Roumania.

In the message of the throne Carol told them that he had come home to rule the country to the best of his ability; to rule it without any desire for ven-



geance for past wrongs or any enmity for things said or done against him.

Yet even while His Majesty spoke, Prince Shtirbey packed hastily.

The Roumanian minister to Paris, Mr. Diamandi, was told to pack and go.

The Queen Mother applauded the Passion Play at Oberammergau while waiting tremulously for her son's orders.

People, who had seen the disguised actor's arrival, looked at their King in Parliament and wondered that he had changed so overnight. He did indeed look thinner and more worn out than he had on the previous day.

This difference in appearances gave Carol the reputation of being a hard worker. A new reputation is like a new broom. It sweeps well.


People said:

"He works fifteen and twenty hours a day; just as he played fifteen and twenty hours a day."

"He has tremendous vitality. No wonder women love him!"

As if by miracle, there were no more stories about Nicholas running over people with his high-powered car, and no more stories about his slapping old professors and maltreating women and children.


But they haven't given up the ship, Queen Marie and her clique—they are hard at work.



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## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

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I HAVE just come back from Roumania, my country of birth. While there I have listened to princes and peasants, to merchants and workingmen, to diplomatists, military men and financiers. They spoke of war and revolution with that unmistakable accent born of more than mere premonition.

I have seen people starving in the cities while the granaries groaned with wheat and corn.

I have looked into the pitiful eyes of the villagers and peasants who dread the coming of winter. The looms are gone. They were destroyed during and after the war. No one knows how to twist the spindle any more, to roll yarn, to make cloth. The factories in towns have replaced the old home industries and the people are half naked. The peasants will herd into their mud brick homes and huddle together against the cold after they have used the grain for fuel. But what about the people in villages and towns? What about the million unpaid government employes and the hungry army?

What care these starvelings whether the King has



made up with the Queen or not? The peasants are not concerned with their King's amorous escapades! All they know is that they have labored as few people have ever labored, that they have produced huge crops which lie unsold, unwanted, like so many grains of sand of the sea shore.

They have been told for two years that their condition was bad because the thieving Bratianu government had been too long in power. They were told that things would change for the better under the new government. They believed and agreed to support "The Peasant Party" which had the same right to call itself by that name as had the Bratianus to call themselves "The Liberal Party."

Under the new government the price of wheat plunged lower down but the taxes grew heavier. The land that had been given to the peasants ten years ago was being bought back by the "Indian givers," the boyars and politicians.

A few months ago these same peasants were told to rejoice over King Carol's return; told that they were in a bitter plight because they had no King to speak of; that a large country like theirs could not be ruled by a little boy and a regency composed of one young inebriate and two old slow owls. The peasants believed again. Dumb, credulous, slow-moving, it was easier for them, more hopeful, to believe than not to believe.





Now the winter has already come down on their land. The pines in the mountains are covered with snow to the topmost branches, and the frost has gripped the valleys. Wolves roam the fields and the outskirts of villages. The wheat, the rye and the corn are still unsold. The people will starve because there is too much wheat in the land and not because there is too little. What a curious commentary on the administration of a country! What else will the politicians tell the peasant now? Could they make him forget that he is cold and naked and hungry and hopeless by making him fret as to whether Carol should go to the coronation with his Queen or his latest paramour, whoever she be?

An empty stomach has no ears. The "Peasant Party" and the other parties, will try to divert the minds of the people from the real problems. The government and its henchmen will encourage, or close an eye to pogroms against the Jews and other minority groups. They will have to do something to divert the minds from the real issue.

A few affairs of the kind happened while I was in Roumania. The Jewish homes of the town of Borsha were robbed and burned to the ground. But the peasants got very little out of that. The Jews were as poor as the peasants, if not poorer. The only result I could see of that outbreak was the homelessness of some two hundred families



which the government declared itself unable to shelter, to feed or to protect.

"Take care of your own destitutes," the government replied to Jewish representatives who protested against the barbarous behavior of the hoodlums.

There will be other diversions, one more barbarous than the other, and the last one may be a war with real and fancied enemies.

Russia has already served notice of her intended invasion of Bessarabia. France will have to come to Roumania's assistance if such a thing happens, or Roumania will ally itself with France's enemies—Italy, Austria, Hungary and perhaps Germany. Those at the head of the Roumanian government cannot be expected to do their utmost to avoid such a war if they can hope to stave off their fall thereby. As long as they hold on to power in war or peace the wealth of the politicians increases miraculously fast, while the people groan, famish or die.

The Liberal Party and the Peasant Party have left the coffers of the treasury empty; yet the officials of these parties were not empty-handed when they dropped the reins of government.

Roumania has been governed by two alternating sets of thieves. No secretary of finance has ever been able to give a clean account of all the money that has passed through his hands. No new secretary of finance has ever made any strenuous effort



to demand such an accounting—and for good reason.

What then? What will happen to Roumania in the near future?

In this hard-headed industrial civilization, the captaincy of a country belongs to the one best fitted for his office. No one inherits the right to the helm of a ship. Even ownership does not entitle to captaincy . . . because there are other ships on the sea.

"There is no greater immorality than to occupy a place you cannot fill," Napoleon wrote to his brother Joseph, King of Spain.

Inheritance of the right to rule is no longer believed to be divine; unless one inherits the qualities necessary to make a ruler.

The presidency of a bank is not hereditary, nor is the generalship of an army.

What Roumania needs is an administrator, an organizer of the highest order, to save it from ruin and anarchy. That poor country needs a man intelligent enough to keep under the ashes the spark that might set the world on fire again. Is King Carol such a man?

Those slow-moving, slow-witted peasants of my Roumania! When they gather like sheep around a flute player on the village green their deep blue eyes look out into the world like those of children. But I have seen them become wolves.



In 1907 the government instigated the time-tried diversion of setting the hungry pack of peasants on the Jews. But the people did not stop there. After burning a few Jewish homes they lighted their torches in the cinders and began burning and destroying the palaces, granaries, fields and stables of the boyars. Armed with scythe, sickle, knives and hay forks, they marched from village to village crying,

"Food."

"Land."

"Seed."

"Your granaries are full. Our bins are empty."

The women, barefooted, with the breast children slung from their brown necks, marched beside the men and bore the lit torches.

"Food."

"Seed."

Old King Carol von Hohenzollern was then on the throne. The cry of the peasants struck home. He had come to Roumania a poor, penniless beggar and had amassed, by shrewd land speculation and unclean business methods, a fortune equal to that of the wealthiest men of Europe. His own granaries were indeed full, though he had exported thousands of carloads of wheat and corn to Germany and Italy.

He was a strong and stubborn man, old Carol. He



did not have enough administrative intelligence to both feed his subjects and enrich himself. But he had the divine right to kill his subjects when they asked him to give them food. Killing them was easier; more in keeping with the military education of a Prussian officer become King of a people he disliked. It also disposed of the matter more definitively. Dead men don't cry for food any more. King Carol the first had just bought several cannons from the Krupp arsenals. The opposition party had dared to cast doubts about their efficiency. The politicians had favored and clamored for French cannon. The Schneiders and the Krupps fought with fistfuls of gold for the privilege of selling their engines to Roumania. Most of the politicians took bribes from both sides. Carol had held out for the Krupp product. He was an honest man. He was financially interested in the German killing machine factory. The peasant rebellion was an opportunity to try out the German firing pieces and prove their worth. Within a few hours, the bodies of seventeen thousand people were blown into the air and the villages of the rebels were a mass of dust and bits of iron and wood.

Carol proved the quality of the Krupp output, quelled the rebellion, saved his granary, the granaries of the boyars, and established himself forever in the hearts of his people. From then on he was



known as "Carol cel Mare," Carol the Great. He had saved the country.

He hated the Roumanians, except those who had studied in Germany and could speak his language. To his dying day he never uttered a word of Roumanian outside the unintelligible message of the throne which he read yearly in Parliament.

Things have changed somewhat since. The official language of the court is now English, and sometimes French, but the same disregard for the natives still rules. The language of the country is never spoken in official circles. King Carol, the second, though born in Roumania, speaks its language haltingly, like a foreigner, and the former prime minister, Maniu, spoke it as if just learned from a book.

While I was in Roumania recently, there gathered about me one day the flower of Roumanian aristocracy and statesmanship. Only one of them, Prince Bibesco, could speak his native tongue. The others spoke French and English. I insisted on talking Roumanian to them. They answered in French. There were five princes, scions of former ruling families and not more than one could speak his native tongue properly.

Even George Bratianu, the son of Jonel, who was then slated to become the leader of the Liberal Party, preferred to talk English and spoke French more fluently than Roumanian.



"Good God!" I cried out. "Suppose you suddenly had to talk from your balconies to the people below. A revolution is not an impossibility. What language would you talk to them?" Back of the unrest and financial ruin of the country lies the fact that Roumania has been ruled by princes and kings who considered the people as sheep. They hated the language of the people as the shearers hate the bleating of the sheep between their knees. Roumania and its tremendous resources are the excuse for loans, alliances, graft and murders.

How much longer can this go on?

Hungary awaits "der Tag" to take back its lost provinces.

Russia raises her paw menacingly over Bessarabia.

And though one of dowager Queen Marie's daughters is Queen of Jugo-Slavia, her husband's subjects are also on the lookout for a chance to broaden their territories. It is yet to be seen on whose side the Jugo-Slavs would fight.

And while all this goes on the press of the world is fed with stories of Carol's "sentimental wanderings" and nursed with photographs of Queen Marie in national costume, with snapshots of King Carol in flannels and with paintings of little Michael in his first long trousers.

But it has been overdone; as overdone as the long drawn out sentimental clinches in the movies.



Readers snicker at the sight of these photographs; as they snicker at the sickly sentimental stuff on the screen.

When the Hohenzollern throne crumbles and falls into desuetude Queen Marie of Roumania shall be entitled to the glory of having hastened the process.

People like myself owe her majesty a debt of gratitude. By her scandalous behavior, by her stories in the American press when she visited these shores, by her blatant cheapness, by her endorsement of toilet articles and by greengrocer mercantilism, she has divested the throne of the last vestiges of dignity. Unwittingly she was, and is, the most efficient Republican propagandist. Her ridiculous play acting could laugh the thrones of the world out of existence. Revolutions cannot do what she has done so well.

Unless one believes her to be a Republican at heart, one who has set out deliberately to destroy the monarchic form of government of her own country, it is unimaginable to conceive what she has done.

Marital fidelity has never been the favorite pastime of kings, queens and princes, but Queen Marie's indiscretions have for years been the talk of Vienna, Paris, New York and her own Bucharest.

To Queen Marie and her clique Roumania was





not a country, but a gold mine. For over twenty years the Shtirbeys, the Bratianus and the Queen have filled their coffers with the gold of the country.

I want to believe that Carol was indignant over the manner in which the people were exploited by the favorites of Queen Marie. But then—he could be honest. He had inherited the major part of his uncle's fortune. Marie was poor. Prince Shtirbey had many daughters who needed dowries. In Roumania I was told that if Prince Shtirbey was unfaithful to his wife it was because he loved her and his children to distraction and wanted to enrich them.

King Ferdinand, Marie, Shtirbey and the Bratianus had fingers in, and their hands on, every industrial and agricultural enterprise of the country. They owned the banks of Roumania. Banks financed only those companies in which that clique owned shares.

Queen Marie, Shtirbey, Bratianu & Co were not animated by any patriotic reason when they forced the Prince heir to renounce the throne. The few years that followed Carol's exile were merry years for them. They squeezed the country dry. The people of the richest country in natural resources were ground down until only the eyes were left them to weep with. They grabbed everything, the



Bratianus. Their banks, the only ones that had any money, took forty, fifty and sixty per cent from merchants, industrialists, houseowners and landowners in need of money. Banks in Roumania pay as high as twenty-five per cent to depositors. Within a few years all the rolling cash had concentrated in a few hands. Lest anybody else stick a finger into the pie, the Bratianus passed a law in parliament forbidding the investment of foreign capital in the industries of the country. They called that law the "Prin noi insine," the "through ourselves" law. The law worked well and rapidly for the "ourselves."

I have seen with my own eyes peasants in chains compelled to drive their low ox carts with grain to the market place when the price was at its lowest. The "ourselves" bought the grain.

The "ourselves" bought the grapes off the vine and sold the wine with their labels on the bottles.

The "ourselves" bought and sold the wood from the forests.

The "ourselves" got the contracts for every public work that was never done.

Those who criticized too loudly disappeared mysteriously, or were thrown in dungeons as "enemies of the country," as spies in the pay of Russia, as Communists and speculators. Those who became "inconvenient" committed suicide or died conveniently of heart failure.



Queen Marie romped over the world, the new one and the old one, in search of new sensations, syndicate contracts, and checks for endorsements of beauty potions. Competing with celebrated actresses and dancers in vogue she has made her country famous and ridiculous beyond words.

I left New York when she arrived. Other Roumanians did likewise. The Roumanian Ambassador to Washington, who had repeatedly advised his government against the Queen Mother's visit to the United States, was glad to go home when she came.

Carol was banished from his country by the mercenary clique behind his mother. When Jonel Bratianu died there was little more left to loot. Jonel Bratianu's brother, Vintila, was a bungler. The Shtirbey-Bratianu clique had grown too fat and too self-confident. They were too rich to bother gathering the little that was left, and were anxious, a bit over-anxious, to secure their loot. The wealth of these gentlemen is in the vaults of international banks. The Liberals slipped.

The "Peasant Party," these "friends of the people" have stuffed their pockets in a hurry. It was only when they were afraid of a revolution that they brought Carol back to the throne. To obtain a loan from France and the United States, a new law was passed permitting foreign capital to exploit the resources of the country. The "peasants" in frock coats



and patent leather shoes have sold the match monopoly to a Swedish firm, and other monopolies to other firms.

Like King Richard the Lion Hearted who cried out that he would sell London if he found a buyer, the Roumanian rulers are advertising for buyers for the patrimony of the country. The mines, the oil wells, forests, fisheries and railroads. Let the buyers beware. Caveat emptor. It is one thing to buy and another to come into possession.

The Peasant government cried that the Bratianus had left the coffers empty. The former secretary of state, Octavian Goga, had emptied the drawers of the petty cash even before he left. He bought himself a castle and an estate in Transylvania.

Yet while they cried "thief, thief," the friends of the people stole and robbed, manipulated, swindled and bought in the estates of the expropriated Hungarian noblemen who had been forced out of their homes beyond the Carpathians.

People close to the King told me that when he discovered that he had been duped by his new friends, he wept like a child. But it is not the business of a king to weep. Martial law still rules in Roumania. It is applied to those unfriendly to the government. The same law could have been applied to false friends.

"Now people suspect also the King of unclean



hands," a newspaper man told me. "For the scoundrels who have brought him back say that they had to have cash to pay Carol's debts before they could get him out of France."

My friend laughed.

"They were in a hurry, the peasants. The Bratianus could well afford to take their loot leisurely. They were well intrenched. Their overfilled coffers bulged with gold. These people here are still poor. In time they too will become more leisurely. Later on they will steal like gentlemen. Carol is very faithful to his friends."

And now what will he do, King Carol? Will he continue to be the tool of his friends and foes, or will he pull himself together and rid the country of the wolves?

If he plays further into the hands of the new or the old clique he saddles upon himself the responsibility for the inevitable dismemberment of Roumania. Revolution. War.

He has the choice of being either the last Hohenzollern King or the first president of the Roumanian republic.



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## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

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CAROL tried to straighten things out at home. His press bureau attempted to assuage the feelings and the sentiments of Europeans and Americans about the cruelty with which he was supposed to have treated his own wife. It was hard work to undo Marie's mischief. She had painted his picture with definite strokes. The mind of the world could not be so easily reversed. Whatever he did and said was caricatured.

Queen Helen had been trumpeted into a martyr. She has never loved Carol. Carol has repeatedly told the world that he has never loved her. As far as their intimate relations were concerned, they were both happier apart than together. He was the father of her child. She had been the victim of political manipulations which had married her to a man physically and spiritually incompatible with her. Now Carol had come back to Bucharest, sat himself down on the throne, given her the title of Queen and insisted that she appear with him at official functions. When she refused he threatened to take the child away from her. He was King.



The former King of Greece, married to one of Carol's sisters, has been living in the Roumanian King's castles ever since he was driven from his own throne. Helen had, therefore, nothing to gain and everything to lose if she antagonized her profligate husband.

"You have sided with my enemies," he wrote to her. "When I was exiled you should have joined me when I asked you to. The place of a wife is beside her husband."

And then suddenly Queen Marie returned home; as chipper as ever, as buoyant as ever, and Carol and Prince Nicholas, Princess Ileana and Queen Helen, with little Michael at her hand, appeared to greet the Dowager Queen at the railroad station. The photographers and the news reel camera men were there too.

Bucharest divided itself. Some were happy that Carol had made up with his mother, that there would be peace henceforth in the royal household. Others said that the Queen would soon show her hand; that she would immediately begin to intrigue, and that she would demand an accounting from Carol for having driven off her favorite, Prince Shtirbey, and her friend the banker.

But Marie did nothing of the kind. If she did reproach her son with his actions she did it softly,



merely pointing out to him that in driving out Shtirbey he had stigmatized his mother.

Carol stood his ground. Queen Marie demanded that Carol reconsider Prince Shtirbey's exile, but did not insist too forcibly. She showed so much humility that Carol was emboldened to tell her that she must keep her peace henceforth.

After a few days at the palace, the Dowager Queen left as suddenly as she had come and announced that she was going to one of her castles on the Black Sea, at Mamaia; to rest from her strenuous voyages and to meditate.

King Carol marvelled at the quick submission of his mother. He had been trained to fear her. Whenever he had gone contrary to her wishes she had bested him. He had steeled himself against her. Her humbleness humiliated him. She had disappointed him.

Was that the woman he had feared so much? Was that the woman whose iron hand had made him reel back every time he had met her? Was she growing old? How was it that she had not stood up more vigorously for Prince Shtirbey? Had her faith in the "Grey Eminence" faded, or had she dismissed Shtirbey because he had not prevented Carol's return? She had not even mentioned to other man!





And then the secret leaked out. Queen Marie had gone to Mamaia with a new friend, a young officer. Bucharest was laughing up its sleeve at the gay old Queen.

"A wonderful woman. These English women have a will of their own."

Furious, Carol ordered that young officer to the other end of the country to some obscure little garrison town.

The fifty-seven-year-old grandmother burst through the palace gates. Disregarding the presence of the King's advisers, she launched forth into the most furious accusations against Carol. She wept. She tore her hair. She pounded the table with her fists. She told him that he was an unnatural, unfeeling wretch. She demanded back her officer.

Taken unawares, Carol pleaded first, then he threatened to have her put behind the walls of a nunnery. The Dowager Queen did not desist. She raised her voice. She refused to leave the room.

Finally, Carol, exhausted, shrugged his shoulders. He recognized his mother's great need for companionship and signed an order that made the Queen happy again.

It was an unwise action. He should have clapped her into a nunnery when he discovered that she was making herself ridiculous. He should have exiled her.



The Queen still has some friends in Bucharest, hidden friends, who believe that her power has not waned forever.

A few days after Queen Marie had returned to Mamaia, a whispering campaign spread the news in Bucharest, over the whole of Roumania, and the rest of the world, that the Roumanians were indeed being ruled by a woman, and by a Jewish woman at that. It was said that Magda Lupescu, the red-headed daughter of the junk peddler, was living in the King's palace.

"The reason Helen refuses to appear publicly with her husband is that she refuses to share him with his Jewish paramour."

Within a few days this rumor was accepted as a certainty. The anti-Semitic press hinted at it. The anti-Jewish propagandists, always friendly to Marie, began to repeat the rumors and give details.

Madame Lupescu was seen here, there and everywhere. They had seen her head at the windows of the palace.

Their own eyes had seen her father visiting the palace.

The Lupescus had received heavy bags of gold from the palace.

The whole wealth of the country was being transferred to that Jewish family.

At anti-Semitic clubs it was said that Magda



Lupescu was playing out the role of Esther in the first part of the biblical story; that the Jews of the world had intrigued her into Carol's graces so that they might rule Roumania; that unless something was done Carol would crown the Jewess as their Queen.

On the strength of these rumors, pogroms against Jews were being organized everywhere. Carol ordered these pogroms suppressed with all the means at the disposal of the government. But the mayors and military commanders of the towns advised caution; lest a general conflagration should follow. When a group of representative Jews visited the Secretary of State and asked protection for their co-religionists, that gentleman answered that the gendarmerie had not been paid for months.

"Pay the gendarmes and I will send them to the rescue of your friends," he said.

Carol did not know what to do to suppress the rumor of Madame Lupescu's return to Roumania.

And then someone had a bright idea. Magda Lupescu, who had been living quietly in Paris, was prevailed upon to appear every day, at four-thirty in the afternoon, at one of the most popular tea rooms in Paris. She was asked to sit for half an hour at one of the most conspicuous tables in the place, so that every one should see her and know that she was in Paris and not with the King in the palace.



Some said she did it out of friendship for the King. Others maintained that she agreed to expose herself in public to save the Jews of her country.

On the dot of the hour, her limousine, driven by a liveried chauffeur, appeared in front of the celebrated tea room at the Place Vendôme, and the tall, red-headed woman, with well-rounded figure, walked jauntily up the few steps. Throwing her ample rich furs about her, she sat down at the table reserved for her.

A few minutes later, reporters, photographers, detectives and statesmen came to assure themselves that she was really there.

The happy news was broadcast to Roumania, to the world. The Queen's friends were check-mated. The anti-Jewish riots stopped—for a while.

"Magda Lupescu is in Paris."

But another one of Carol's former lady friends, an actress, did not intend to let Magda Lupescu get away with so much publicity and have the stage all to herself.

Idlers and visitors frequented that tea room.

A few days later this second young lady reserved a table as conspicuous as that of the red-headed woman, and appeared a few moments after Madame Lupescu had come in.

The Lupescu woman was furious. The other lady was beaming.



A few days later, a third lady, known to have been Carol's latest friend, also reserved a table at the same tea room.

When a fourth lady appeared, Paris began to laugh.

And then a wit, a clever stage man, a friend of one of the three young ladies who had followed Madame Lupescu, told the young actress that she was losing a golden opportunity.

"You are one of four now. If you suddenly stop coming your absence will be even more conspicuous than your presence. Then the news wires of the world would hum."

One after the other, the three young ladies disappeared.

Madame Lupescu continued to live up to her agreement.

Lunching recently at a Russian restaurant close by the Parisian stock exchange, I saw Madame Lupescu appear in the company of a tall, middle-aged gentleman.

I looked at her closely. We nodded to one another.

Turning to my companion, I remarked,

"I really don't see what there is about her to have made her so attractive to King Carol."

"My dear, she is the most faithful and loyal person on earth. When she undertook to capture Prince



Carol's attention and report to the Queen everything she saw and heard, she did so even after she had begun to love the man she had agreed to betray. Think of the ridiculous position she finds herself in now. She must appear at a given place for tea every day. She will do that, no matter what happens, for as long as her agreement lasts. Only death can stop her. That faithfulness is one of the things Carol admires in her."

Perhaps I do admire her myself for that.



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## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

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AFTER Carol's return to Roumania many smoke curtains were lowered over the internal affairs of the country. The outside world was kept amused with stories as to when the official coronation of the King would take place. Then the coronation was postponed time and again for different excuses. A barrage of information was loosened as to the progress of the peace proposals Carol offered to his wife. As the King and the chief magistrate of the country, he had ordered that the divorce, that had already been declared between them, be voided. By his orders, Helen became legally his wife again. To the outside world it seemed that their reconciliation was but a matter of weeks; that Helen postponed this reconciliation as a matter of form to save her own face and pride. But those who knew conditions in Roumania and the affairs of the royal palace knew also that such a reconciliation would never take place; chiefly because Carol did not want it to happen. He may have wanted to give the impression to the world that it



was he who recanted and asked forgiveness from the wife he had betrayed. As a matter of fact he felt that he had been the aggrieved party and that if there was any forgiveness to be asked, Helen had to ask it of him; because she had allied herself with his mother and with the clique that had put him in such a bad light in the eyes of the world. He felt that it was up to him to decide whether he wanted to continue with her as his wife when he should have forgiven her. Those who tried to bring the two together knew that their difficulty was to make Carol forgive Helen and not to make Helen forgive Carol. And Carol was right.

This affair bothered Roumania and the Roumanian people very little. It had to be done to satisfy the outside world. The financial affairs of the country were precarious. The domestic affairs of the King were only of secondary importance.

Shtirbey's exile meant a great deal more than the expulsion from the country of one of the King's enemies. Shtirbey and another friend of Queen Marie were the heads of the most important banking institutions in Roumania and both of them, as friends of Carol's mother, immediately applied the sanctions to Roumania's industrial and financial life. Neither the government nor the industrialists of the country could obtain any loans.

Dowager Queen Marie seemingly stood aside from





all this wrangling and mess and waited to see the results of what her friends were doing to bring Carol to his knees. External loans were becoming more and more difficult to obtain due to the financial unrest of the country and also to the lack of internal political security. The financial pressure became unbearable. The army was not paid. Employes were not paid. Officials had to borrow, steal and rob in order to live.

The news that came out of Roumania was not encouraging to foreign capital. In addition to that, a law had been passed, to relieve the pressure upon Roumanian business men, but it turned out to have entirely different results. I am speaking of the "Concordat preventif" law. This law gave the privilege to every business man to tell his creditors that he was not in a position to pay his bills, and yet it did not give the creditors the right to enforce payment by declaring the man or the firm bankrupt. Upon such a declaration, the creditor's bill was cut in half, and the payment of the other half was spread over five years beginning with the fourth year after the man had declared his inability to pay. The immediate result of that law was that all credits, internal and external, were cut off and that no bank would lend any money. Business men who needed cash were compelled to go to usurers who charged them anything they wished. Even sixty per cent was not con-



sidered high interest in Roumania. Banks paid thirty and thirty-five per cent to the depositors after the "concordat preventif" law was enacted. The external capital which had been expected to flood into Roumania, after the mining laws had been changed, remained severely outside.

"Our last station is Budapest," an American banker announced, when Roumanians with good securities applied for a loan.

The monopolies which were conceded or sold, and the concessions which were given by the government were negotiated under the most onerous conditions. And the amount of currency circulating in the country diminished. When the Roumanian government finally saw itself compelled to sell the monopoly of railroad transportation, a French and English syndicate came to investigate conditions; dallied for a long time and ultimately answered in the negative. Roumanian railroads are among the few properties left to the nation which are not encumbered by debts and mortgages and not included as guaranty for the external bonds, yet even on that property they were unable to raise credits.

"The greatest asset is stability and not security," the financiers answered.

The bonds of the internal debts dropped continually in value. Roumanian banks would not accept them as collateral even for forty per cent of their



face value. The bonds which had been given to the boyars, when their land was appropriated, could not be marketed at all. The Bratianu banks kept on hammering at the financial anvil. And then Carol was made to see that under present conditions one did not get rid of an enemy by exiling him from the country. That an enemy could keep a strangle hold upon a nation even from a distance.

At a meeting in Vienna between Shtirbey, Kauffman and representatives of the government of King Carol, an attempt was made to come to a working agreement with the friends of Marie. They were asked to loosen their grip upon the country.

It was a secret meeting, but enough of it has leaked out to prove that at that meeting it was Shtirbey who held the whip hand. He claimed now to be the aggrieved party. He had been ignominiously treated. What he demanded, practically, was that the King should apologize to him; that his exile should be revoked. He demanded similar terms for his financial friends and even demanded to know what the future policy of the King would be towards the Queen Mother.

Nothing was settled at that conference. Financial conditions in Roumania continued to be what they *had* been. More pressure was applied upon the business men. The government found it even more difficult to obtain the necessary cash to run its affairs.



Carol's counsellors advised caution, and in their nervousness, began to point out to the King that there were higher interests than those of a personal nature; that if the country demanded it, he had to submerge his personal animosity before the highest claims of national interest. King Carol was again between the devil and the deep sea. He had a choice of either seeing his country ruined or being made the laughing stock of the world. At the present moment he is still trying to avoid both traps.

\* \* \*

The trouble with King Carol is that he is a vacillating man. He wakes up in the morning with the strength of a Napoleon and the energy of an Alexander, but winds up the day as a skeptic who doubts whether action has ever been worth while. He hasn't yet made up his mind whether he wants to be the dictator of Roumania or the man who will introduce real democracy into the country of the Walachians.

He is a despot at one moment and as soft as wax in the hands of his advisors the next.

He still does not know whether he is to rule the country as it would best serve the national interest, or rule it so as to make himself appear a civilized man in the eyes of the world, regardless of what happens to the country. He still fears the possibility of exile for himself. Even while he is on the throne he is



thinking that the day may not be far off when he may have to look to foreign lands for asylum. And he is in love with Magda Lupescu. If he bring her to the palace the peasants would be goaded into an uprising against the Jews and would slaughter them all. The anti-Semites, friends of Marie, keep on harping on the fact that Magda Lupescu is a Jewess.

"Do you want to have a Jewish queen? She would have the churches torn down and replace them with synagogues!"

As I write this, news arrives that Vintila Bratianu has suddenly departed from among the living. He died of heart failure while working in his garden.

Obituaries in newspapers and magazines point out that his death clears the way for a reconciliation between the Liberal Party and the King. Vintila Bratianu died a little too conveniently. Convenient deaths happen a little too frequently in Roumania not to remind one of the days of the Borgias.

As the former premier of his country and the leader of the Liberal Party, Vintila Bratianu had been the only man in Parliament who dared openly to vote against the decree which reinstated Carol on the throne. I have hated his motive but have admired his courage. By his opposition, he committed the whole Liberal Party to a definite anti-Carolist stand, and practically wiped out any chance the Liberals might ever have had to come into power.



Though the Liberals had been in favor of the regency and had opposed Carol's return with all the means at their disposal, Vintila Bratianu's open opposition at a moment when Carol was King, *de facto*, had forever sealed the possibility of his party's working with the King.

The Roumanians are politically a very pliable people. The younger element of the Liberal Party did not fail to see that their leader's action was against their interests; that he had thrown them out of the gears of the political machine.

Even the opposition party thought that Vintila had not acted wisely. For since there must be an opposition, it was better to have the Liberal Party as an opponent to the Peasant Party than any new party that might form itself.

The Liberal Party split. The younger element, led by George Bratianu, son of Jonel Bratianu, declared itself in favor of Carol. The older element, with Vintila at the head, continued to refuse to recognize the legality of the decree which reinstated Carol von Hohenzollern to the throne of Roumania. It would have been easy to dismiss the older element and accept the young one as *The* Liberal Party. But the older faction controlled the banks; the older element with Shtirbey and Marie. Parallel with the Hohenzollern dynasty there was the Bratianu dynasty. The sceptre of the Bratianus wielded, some-



times, greater power than the sceptre of the King, This was pointed out to me in a recent conversation with George Bratianu.

"Why don't you, the younger element of the country, put your shoulders to the wheel?" I had asked. "The older men have almost ruined it. They have led the people astray; they have led the whole country astray. Why don't you, who have been educated in Europe and in the United States, take hold of the reins of the country and govern it in a more civilized manner than it has been governed until now?"

George Bratianu, a mild-mannered young man of about thirty, threw his hands up in the air.

"They have a grip on the country—not a political grip, but a financial grip."

"They" meant his uncle, his own family.

He, George, the son of Jonel who had so actively opposed Carol, who had been his personal enemy, was willing to let bygones be bygones and work with his young King. But there were other powers at work. Shtirbey was still the shadow King of Roumania.

Another political man said that these young men, the Bratianus and Cantacuzenes, had no political experience; that it would be dangerous to entrust them with the reins of the government.

To my reply that the political experience of the older men had not been used for the benefit of the



country, I was told that I had been too long away from Roumania and did not understand what political experience meant.

"Don't forget the Queen. She has powerful allies. These young men might go out and oppose her openly, really oppose her. She is the greatest danger to the country."

"The Queen?"

"Well Shtirbey—if you must cross your t's."

Slowly but surely the King of Roumania is being humiliated by his mother. He is being compelled to recall the men whom he had exiled and is being forced to reinstate her into full power, and with full honors, to the position she has occupied before.

Instead of telling the Dowager Queen to consider her age and to retire from political life; to go somewhere and rest and enjoy what is still left to her of life, the King of England has interfered in her behalf and has reprimanded Carol for his behavior towards his mother.

Royal pressure is also being applied by the other remaining royal houses of Europe. Carol is being told what to do and how to behave. New sanctions are being applied. New financial pressure is brought to bear down the stiffened neck of Marie's son. The interest of the European royal houses is not the same as that of the Roumanian people. Monarchs are afraid to see one more monarchy disappear from the





face of the earth. They are afraid of their own security if more ridicule is heaped upon the Roumanian royal household. Such ridicule reflects also upon their heads, and endangers their position and power in their own countries.

The thrones of Europe lean against one another. Queen Marie, after having made them all look awry, has appealed to them to come to her rescue, to straighten out her toppling high seat.

If King Carol really has the interest of his people at heart, if he has enough strength of character, he still has the opportunity of saving himself the inevitable humiliations that are in store for him.

It is unbelievable that he does not know how much depends on his actions.

Roumania is a rich country—one of the richest countries in the world.

Its people are sturdy and healthy.

It has enormous possibilities.

Ore, coal, copper, gold, for which in other countries miners and machines must go down into the bowels of the earth, lie almost on the surface of Roumania's soil.

Its forests are heavy with beautiful timber.

Its vast fields are fat and rich.

Its rivers are full of fish.

Even if only half well administered, the people



of Roumania could live happily and in great abundance.

For unexplainable reasons, the history of that poor country, my native country, is the history of wars and massacres, of mal-administration, of cruelty, persecution and internal suicide.

The Hohenzollerns have not improved the moral and physical condition of the country. They have made it the laughing stock of the world. They have not been interested in the improvement of the conditions of the country. They have used their power as recklessly and as indiscriminately as parvenus use their newly acquired riches. Stupidly, grossly, ostentatiously.

If Carol sits much longer on the throne of Roumania, the time is not far off when he will again be seen behind a little table on the terrace of a Parisian café; just one more exiled king in the great city of Rabelais and Voltaire. And lean fingers will point at him.

“There is the man who could have averted the greatest European war and has failed to do so.”

And who will then care whether red-headed Magda, dark-eyed Mirela, plump Zizi, delicate Elvira or stately Helen will be at his side? No one in the world. He will be just another failure—another one who had missed the opportunity to make this earth a



happier place to live in—another one whose fumbling fingers had set loose one more hell upon the world.

\* \* \*

And where will Marie be then, if she still be among the living? Applauding another Passion Play?

END.







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